GUIDE TO TRUE RELIGION

WOODS.

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GUIDE

TO

TRUE RELIGION.

BY

REV. P. WOODS.

BALTIMORE:
JOHN MURPHY & CO.,
1898.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Introduction,	1
The Mosaic Law,	4
Chapter I.—Religious State of the Peoples of the Earth at the Time of Christ's Birth,	8
II.—The Birth of Christ, His Teaching and Establishment of His Church,	14
III.—Dissemination of Christian Doctrine,	30
IV.—Reception of Christianity by the Nations of the Earth,	40
V.—Triumph of Christianity over Paganism,	53
VI.—Heresy,	65
VII.—Government Consolidation of the Church,	79
VIII.—The Church fulfilling her Mission,	94
IX.—Greek Schism,	107
X.—Mohammedanism,	120
XI.—The Church a Pacificator,	138
XII.—The Church an Educator,	148
XIII.—Religious Agitation.—Things leading to the Great Secession of the Sixteenth Century,	160
XIV.—Martin Luther,	171
XV.—Luther.—Continued,	187
XVI.—Calvinism, or Presbyterianism,	206
XVII.—The Anglican Church.—Episcopalianism,	222
XVIII.—The True Christian Church,	240
XIX.—Observations,	256
XX.—Enlargement of Christ's Fold,	273
XXI.—Return to the Fold,	287

PREFACE.

The lamentable acceptance of different beliefs by the many denominations professing Christianity has prompted the writing of this little book. The author has endeavored to show that as Christ is truth He cannot be the author of two or more faiths differing from each other. Whilst it is hoped it will be of interest to all, it is intended especially for those who, sincere in the desire to serve God and solicitous about their eternal salvation, may reasonably be in doubt, viewing the many creeds existing, as to which they should profess that they may find peace for their souls and the assurance of eternal happiness.

The author did not deem it essential to his purpose in the chapter on the Greek Church to treat separately of the distinct bodies of non-Catholic Christians observing the Greek rite, but for brevity's sake includes them all under the denomination of the Greek Church.

RICHWOODS, MO.,
February, 1898.

INTRODUCTION.

THE most momentous of all subjects to man is that concerning his eternal salvation. No other, however great, has an equal claim to the occupation of his mind. Man being a dependent being, the practice of religion under an acceptable form, or the true worship of God, is the means by which he can acquire eternal happiness. The form, however, of this worship has not been the same in all ages of the world. In the primitive ages and even to the event of the reception of the Old Law by the Israelites in the desert, no prescribed form of worship seems to have existed. Yet that men acquitted themselves of this duty we have abundant evidence in the Sacred Scriptures; for Cain and Abel, children of the father of the human race, offered sacrifice to the Almighty. The presumption is, that they performed this species of worship in obedience to a verbal communication from the Supreme Being or intuitively. But where the worship of sacrifice prevailed, it is reasonable to believe that prayer was not wanting, but that it ascended as an internal with the external offering.

The main part, therefore, of the worship of God, if not the whole, may be regarded as comprised in these two acts, prayer and sacrifice, with the hope of a Redeemer.

This acceptable worship was practised in the circle of the series of patriarchal families up to the time of Moses. But these were a small portion of the human race. The greater portion, descendants also of the patriarchal stock, sought new homes in distant lands from that of their birth. They also possessed some knowledge of the manner in which to worship the true God and the traditionary faith. But having removed from the guidance and salutary restraint of God-fearing superiors, they soon fell into error, and instead of one true God they admitted a plurality of gods as fitting objects of their worship. Some there were who in the general corruption preserved obscure ideas of the Supreme Being and, following the dictates of reason, led good moral lives. In the absence of a written law regarding faith and divine worship, it may be presumed that such will not be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

Where there is no prescribed law the liberty of the subject is less restricted than where law defines his obligations and exacts their fulfilment. Hence those living in the ages preceding the promulgation of the Old Law, enjoyed a much greater latitude for their religious ideas and opinions and, if we except the Jewish people, this freedom continued

in the other nations till the promulgation of the New Law. Therefore, in judging them they should not be subjected to the same rigorous code as those living under the Mosaic Law or that given by Christ.

In the Divine plan for man's regeneration a people was selected by the Supreme Being from whom the Saviour should arise. The fidelity of Abraham and his correspondence with divine grace gained for him, besides many blessings, the great honor and distinction of being the father of this people from whom the Redeemer should come.

THE MOSAIC LAW.

THE Israelites experienced many proofs of the providence and protection over them of the Supreme Being. Their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian bondage; the pillar of fire and the cloud sent to direct their course in the wilderness; the supernatural way in which food for their subsistence in the tedious journey to the promised land was supplied to them, manifest the divine care and protection for the descendants of Abraham. Their repinings and yearnings for the fleshpots of their bondage, ill repaid such beneficence and heavenly favors. They were a gross, earthly-minded people, so that one might naturally ask what excellence of character rendered them objects of special care to the Divinity in preference to other nations. From their long sojourn in Egypt and their associating with the natives, they became so contaminated in their religious principles, and their conception of the true God became so obscure and erroneous, that in the glorious event of the reception of the Old Law by Moses on Mount Sinai in the awful splendor of flashing lightning and peals of thunder, at the

very time in which they received a manifestation of Divine favor, they fell into idolatry.

The promulgation of the Old or Mosaic Law marks the first great epoch in the religious history of mankind. From the creation to the reception of the Law on Mount Sinai, a latitude necessarily existed in the sphere of man's conception of the Divinity, in the nature and extent of his belief.

One great principle distinguished the belief of the patriarchs and their descendants forming a people or race in the patriarchal line from the creeds of the other nations of the earth, the belief in one Supreme Being to whom all creatures are subject and from whom all blessings flow. Hence the perpetuated practice of sacrifice among this people as an acknowledgment of His universal supremacy; of their entire dependance on Him; to propitiate Him also and to implore His blessing. If we add to this actual part of worship the belief in a future Redeemer, we have the essentials of the religion of the pre-Mosaic true believer.

The Jews, with all their faults and refractory propensities, manifested the greatest reverence, mingled with holy awe, towards all pertaining to their religion. The terrible, miraculous punishment of Abiron, Dathan and Core, must have impressed them with a salutary fear of assuming to themselves the exercise of religious duties to which they had not been divinely called. It also exalted the state of priesthood in their estimation, and distinguished

the priests from the multitude as the only ministers acceptable to God for performing the ceremonial duties of religion.

The Jews, as a nation, do not appear to have excelled other peoples in morality, intellectual possessions or general accomplishments, but the patriarchs or their most distinguished ancestors proved themselves faithful observers of the traditions of their fathers living from the time of Adam to the issuing of the Mosaic Law. On account of the fidelity of their God-fearing men and because of God's promises to some of them, the Jews became the most divinely favored nation of the earth. How they appreciated this honor the books of the Old Testament testify.

In the Divine ordination it appeared just that the Saviour of men should have an honorable pedigree, and that prophecy should indicate events as signs given in connection with the universally expected birth of man's Redeemer. Hence the genealogy of our Saviour begins with Abraham, a most honorable personage, not only by his excelling moral qualities and faithful worship of the true God, but also by his singular position as a man of great wealth and no despicable foe when determined to act in a just cause. The sacred lineage runs through the series of patriarchs, till it includes in its course the illustrious King David and continues to the last of his descendants on the Jewish throne. Prophecy of the signs and events preceding and relating to

the birth of the Saviour of men being fulfilled, He was born at the time indicated by the prophecy of Daniel in the city of Bethlehem near Jerusalem.

The Jews, especially the teachers and expounders of the Old Law, must have known accurately the time predicted for the birth of the Redeemer. They made the understanding of the Law their study; so that the signs of the times received careful attention, and no event in fulfilment or confirmatory of prophecy passed unnoticed. In verification of which, many of the Jews about the time of Christ's birth were looking for His coming and cherished the hope that they would be favored with seeing their Saviour before their eyes closed in death: notably the prophetess Anna and holy Simeon, who besought the Lord to dismiss His servant when he had beheld and received in his arms the infant Jesus in the Temple.

The expiration of the time to elapse according to the prophecy of Daniel before the Redeemer's coming and the transference of the sceptre from the royal line of David to a foreigner, as predicted, must have raised expectancy of the long-foretold, long-desired event not only among the doctors of the Law, but also throughout the entire Jewish nation. These were the immediate signs and indications according to prophecy announcing the birth of Christ, which took place in the stable at Bethlehem.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

Religious State of the Peoples of the Earth at the Time of Christ's Birth.

GREAT changes had taken place in the lives of individuals and communities since the time that Adam, sorrowfully relinquishing his happy abode of innocence, settled outside of Eden and there, first of the human race, discharged the duties of the head of the family. These changes appeared in their religious observances as in other things. As Adam was endowed with intuitive knowledge of a high degree, there can be no doubt that he knew it to be his duty to worship in an appropriate manner his bountiful Creator, even in his altered, less favorable relation, as a sinner, to the author of his being. Though the forms and sum of his religious performances cannot be incontrovertibly stated, yet from his great intuitive knowledge it may be reasonably assumed that he practised prayer and the

offering of sacrifice. That he practised the latter act of worship may be inferred from the fact that his sons, Cain and Abel, offered sacrifice to the Almighty.

As the descendants of Adam increased in numbers, it became necessary to extend by degrees from the ancestral or paternal grounds to distant lands where rich and abundant pasture offered them inviting fields for new abodes. As distance increased between them and the paternal roof, so also the ideal purity of worship receded from their minds. This deterioration may be easily accounted for. For their guidance in the matter of religious worship they depended entirely on tradition. But tradition, unless aided by something less mutable, such as a written law, is liable to such changes as to lead to mystification from the innate tendency some people have to alter by amplification or diminution whatever they have heard. Thus the Adamite tradition in the lapse of time may have been lost to his more distant and morally lax descendants through the process of metamorphosing original tradition. In the ante-diluvian period, therefore, the knowledge of the true God became almost universally obscure and His worship ceased, except with a few members of the human race. As a result man became depraved and debased; for all flesh had corrupted its way, as sacred scripture informs us, to such an extent that God, to put an end to multiplying iniquity, caused the waters of the Deluge to destroy

the human race, with the exception of the eight persons preserved in Noah's Ark.

In the post-diluvian period the true worship was practised by Noah and his immediate descendants, at least for some time, but soon the evil tendency of human nature manifested itself, and the seeds of sin progressively yielded their abundant harvest of crimes and abominations. Even under the patriarchal eye all his descendants were not free from its stain, he having uttered a curse in reproof and punishment of it upon the offspring of one of his sons.

Salutary fear of God did not long restrain the wicked propensities of man, even with the remembrance of the awful punishment of sin by the universal deluge fresh in their minds.

In spreading from Noah's home the members of the human race also departed in the course of time from the true worship of God, as a sequence to at first the impairing of the knowledge of God by the admission of gross ideas relative to the Deity. By the commission of some sins the mind becomes darkened, so that the mental view being obscured it is unable to retain the perception of what pertains to man's higher or spiritual sphere. He descended to a form of belief embodying the materially sensible as he fell into depravity, and attaching himself inordinately to the material world in which he lived, devoted himself to unreasonable, unrestrained gratification of the senses. When communities were formed and towns and cities built, the degree of

moral corruption and the nature of false belief differed considerably. Some fell so low in human debasement, apparently knowing no limit to their wickedness, such as Sodom and Gomorrha, that they were intolerable to the sight of God, drawing upon themselves extermination by fire.

In all communities and nations there existed some form of religious worship, ascending from the adoration of inferior animals of the earth to the worship of the planets that move in the universe; for it is natural to man, knowing his own dependence, to acknowledge a supreme being, true or false, to whom he attributes a connection with his happiness or misery. The most horrible and revolting of religious worship was that in which human victims were immolated to the false deity. Among the more enlightened nations flourishing near the Christian era, viz., the Greek and the Roman, a more intellectual religion found acceptance. These, with Jupiter and Zeus at the head of the array of their respective gods, approached nearer than others to the belief in the true and only God.

The Jews alone of all the nations of the earth possessed a knowledge and practised the worship of the true God; yet, it may be said that even they had but a very imperfect conception of His nature and attributes. The Jews, however, had preserved more carefully, adhered more reverently to the traditions of their patriarchal ancestors in pre-Mosaic times. This traditional observance, however, can

only be asserted of them in a free state and when few in number. In their Egyptian captivity they scarcely escaped contamination in their religious principles from their constant intercourse with their masters, practising a different belief of a lower, sensible and antagonistic nature. Of this abundant evidence is afforded in the narrative of their deliverance from their bondage and of their long journey to the Promised Land. They had palpable proof of the omnipotence of their God, convincing evidence as well as assurance of the Divine care and protection; yet, they manifested their unworthiness of the heavenly favors bestowed upon them by their murmurs in the desert against their leaders appointed by God to liberate them from the oppressive yoke in the land of Egypt. Most of all, they showed their unspiritual tendency in sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt even in bondage, rather than be free and fed by the bountiful hand of God.

Up to the promulgation of the Old Law given to them on Mount Sinai, the Jews, like other nations, were bound only by the natural law and tradition. For them the Mosaic Law introduced a new condition, a strict performance of duties moral and religious. The sphere of responsibility was enlarged, but they had also the assurance of the Divine aid; temporal blessings with the promise of happiness in eternity.

The other nations still continued to be governed by the natural law innate to man and by tradition.

How far the latter influenced their lives it would be difficult to state with certainty. That they possessed some traditional heritages may be generally admitted, and amongst these that of the advent of a great benefactor to the human race, a savior, at a specified time. Reference to this great event may be found in the works of distinguished writers of different nations. Socrates among the Greeks, Tacitus among the Romans, Zoroaster among the Persians, speak of it in no obscure terms. The tradition cannot be asserted peculiar to any nation; it may be said to be almost common to all, some having a fuller, more definite knowledge than others of the advent of the Redeemer.

Such was the religious state of the nations of the earth at the time of the birth of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

The Birth of Christ, His Teaching and Establishment of His Church.

THE most important event to man after his expulsion from Paradise is the birth of Christ. When Adam heard the words of expulsion from Eden, together with the sentence consigning him to a cheerless and laborious life, he was comforted no doubt by the promise that the woman's seed should triumph over the serpent, the devil, who had caused them to lose their happy abode in the garden of pleasure and under whose power they had to some extent fallen. This is the first, yet indefinite, allusion made to the great spiritual conqueror Jesus Christ, issuing not from the dual cause of generation but from the woman. He was frequently spoken of in subsequent prophecies, and the time of his advent accurately stated by the prophet Daniel. The universal event, so long promised and so often the theme of prophesy, took place in a stable at Bethlehem in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, heir and successor to the great Julius, assassinated in the Roman Senate, when the Saviour of men was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

No welcome, no national rejoicing greeted the noblest of infants, the mightiest of babes. No general announcement to the Jewish nation at the time signalized the arrival amongst them of the King of Kings who should reign in the house of Jacob forever. But a celestial host, with angelic melody, supplied the want of human natal celebrations, illuminating the wonderful scene and joyfully announcing to the shepherds of the vicinity the birth of the Saviour. Indeed, it may be reasonably doubted that the Jews, judging from their subsequent treatment of Christ, would acclaim Him as the long-promised Messias of prophecy, especially when the humble circumstances of His birth are considered. There was nothing in the prophecies regarding Him to cause them to exclude from their notions of the Son of David, that He would lead them to that state of power and prosperity by glorious triumphs enjoyed by their ancestors under the Royal Prophet. The designs of Heaven were otherwise. Not only to the Jews did He come, but to all nations. The Jews did not comprehend the extent of the mission of Christ, and hence their attitude toward Him.

The first manifestation of Our Saviour's superhuman intelligence occurred on the occasion of His visit to the Temple at the age of twelve years, when He astonished the doctors of the law by the extraordinary knowledge He displayed in disputing with them and asking them questions. This was but an

incident in His private life, yet one sufficient to cause well-disposed persons to see in Him something more than human.

At the age of thirty years Christ began the work of His mission. The principal works of His public career comprised teaching or preaching, prayer, and the performance of miracles. These wonderful works, His miracles, should have brought conviction to any unprejudiced mind of His divine nature. They failed, however, to make any favorable impression on the majority of the Jews, especially those of their priesthood whose hearts seem to have been perverted. His rebukes administered against their sinful character were a cause of humiliation and cut them to the core. They were the expounders of the law, the teachers of others, being a privileged class, also, they were held in high estimation by the people. For another, not recognized as of their own order, to assume the position of their teacher and reformer, was a thing intolerable to them. They retaliated by endeavoring to compass His ruin. They could not assail Him in His character, for the Son of God was beyond reproach. Their enmity and hatred toward Him impelled them to have recourse to wicked means. Under the appearance of seeking instruction, they asked questions with the object of finding something in His answers or teaching contrary to their law, and thus have cause for His arraignment. But all their wiles proved ineffectual. In their blind perversity they could

see only man in the object of their hatred. The evidence of His Divinity brought belief in His mission to others; but to the ruling class of the Jews, from the High Priest to the scribe, it brought but envy and defamation of His character, for in their wicked hostility to Him they attributed His miracles done for the benefit of humanity to an evil source, even to the Satan the enemy of mankind. Failing to ensnare Our Lord in His speech, the Jews resolved upon a more violent course of action towards Him and waited the opportunity of conveniently apprehending Him, yet so as not to arouse the hostility of the people, for these held Him in the highest estimation for His faultless character, His pure elevating doctrine and the wonders He performed amongst them. Many of them also believed in Him as the true Messiah.

Shortly after entering on His public career Christ began the formation of His Church. He designed it to be composed of two portions: the one, the teaching and ruling, on whom He conferred the powers which He exercised Himself for the salvation of souls; the other, the more numerous, to be subject to the former in what pertained to spiritual matters necessary unto salvation. He chose twelve men, called Apostles, as the nucleus of the teaching and ruling power. To these were added the priests of the same order, but of less authority, whose Divine appointment is acknowledged in the fact that Christ commissioned seventy-two of His disciples to pre-

cede Him as a means of preparation in the places which he was going to visit to preach to the people His Gospel, and to inculcate the necessary means for entering the Kingdom of Heaven. The divinely appointed element of the priesthood is also implied in the words of St. James the Apostle, as follows: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him." *Cath. Ep.*, ch. 5, v. 14.

These were the two immediately divinely appointed elements of the ruling power in the Church of Christ.

As Christ's Church has been aptly denominated a flock, even by Himself, these two elements, the Apostles with the bishops their successors, and the priests, are appropriately termed pastors thereof. The Saviour of men constituted His Church a visible society; as reasons demands, experience teaches and history proves, it requires a visible head or supreme ruler. As Christ was the most perfect of all organizers, it cannot be reasonably supposed that He would omit so essential a requisite for the government of the greatest, most durable, society the world has ever seen. To this post of honor and responsibility He appointed St. Peter as His first vicegerent on earth. But as this ever-increasing society, the Church of

Christ, should continue to exist in all subsequent ages after the death of St. Peter, it requires no argument to show that a succession of supreme rulers must govern it till the end of the world. Hence the series of supreme pontiffs, the consecutive successors to St. Peter in the Episcopal Apostolic See of Rome. The words of Christ addressed to St. Peter: "I will give to thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (*Matt.*, ch. XVI, v. 18–19) and "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (*Jn.*, ch. XXI v. 15, etc.) are to be applied to each of St. Peter's successors, who have been raised to the same dignity of chief ruler of Christ's Church and invested with the same authority, for the same conditions existed after the death of St. Peter that did in the Apostolic Age for the government of the Christian Church.

The training of the Apostles for the propagation of His doctrine was the work of the Divine Master. They were mostly illiterate men, as the narrative of their lives reveals, yet they were intended to discourse on the most profound subjects that the mind can think on, and before all classes of society, the noble and the cultured, as well as the humble aud untaught. For this purpose He gave them no written treatise, appointed no task for study, but He taught them orally, impressed upon their minds the principles of the religion they were

soon to introduce into the nations of the earth. As Christ differed in this mode of establishing His religion from other founders, so this feature in the formation of the Church deserves more than passing notice from the student of Christianity, for the neglect of it may lead to grave errors, especially in those who hold tenaciously to their own opinion on scriptural matters.

The Apostles attended Our Lord in His labors of preaching to the people and in healing the sick. They had, therefore, the best model that could be desired for learning how they should conduct themselves in their subsequent career of preachers of the Gospel, and of performing the other important duties of their vocation. In this preparation they were reminded by the impressive example of their Master not to neglect their own salvation. He retired frequently after His labors and spent a considerable portion of time in communing with His heavenly Father by holy prayer. It cannot be doubted that this was principally for example to others, especially for those whom He had called, and those whom in future time He would call, to the discharge of the sacerdotal functions which He Himself performed. The inspired writers of the New Testament also inform us that He retired at times with His disciples. On these occasions, as may be understood, He withdrew them from the multitude to accustom them to attend to their own sanctification whilst laboring for the salvation of

others; to infuse into them His own spirit; for each of them should subsequently reproduce in their respective fields of labor His missionary career, confirming their divine mission by miracles not less wonderful and convincing than those they beheld performed by their Master. Of the love and practice of prayer He gave them His own impressive example, retiring apart and alone, devoting a considerable portion of time both during the day and night to spiritual communing with His heavenly Father. The mortification of the flesh He inculcated more forcibly by practice than by exhortation, by rigorous fasting. In brief, He gave an example for the love and practice of the Christian virtues which they beheld in His own life a living model. Against pride and self-esteem, on account of any great work they might perform among the people to whom they were sent as preachers of the Gospel, He warned them when He told them not to rejoice because they had power over evil spirits and that the latter were subject to them, but rather that their names were written in the Book of Life.

That the Apostles had a salutary solicitude for their own salvation is evident from the words St. Paul, who, notwithstanding the proofs of his acceptability to His divine Master, yet declares that he chastised his body and brought it into subjection lest having preached to others to urge them to the securing of their salvation, he himself should become a castaway.

Though the Apostles accompanied our Lord during the greater part of His public life, they were unable to comprehend the extent of His divine mission to men. Neither did they possess a complete idea of the magnitude of the work for which they were destined. It was not unreasonable for them to believe that their Master was invincible physically as well as spiritually. Hence, when He alluded to His passion, as the time approached for the redemption of fallen man, they seemed not to understand the full import of His words. They had probably a vague idea of some strange, trouble-producing event to happen at Jerusalem at the time of celebrating the Jewish passover, to which celebration they accompanied their Master with wondering expectation of what should happen. If the apprehension of any sinister design against their beloved Lord found place in their minds, it must have been dispelled by the joyful reception accorded Him by the multitude as He entered the Jewish Capital riding on an ass.

The narrative of the Last Supper presents a most affecting, solemn scene. The labors of the great Master for man's redemption were now approaching completion, whilst the efficacy of the religious ceremonies prescribed by the Old Law also saw its end. For in that upper chamber where Jesus sat with His twelve disciples, a new and perfect Paschal Lamb replaced forever the figurative one of the Jews. What solemn thoughts, thoughts of adoration,

of gratitude, of love, must have filled the minds of the disciples at the time of their first Holy Communion. What spiritual fruits must have enriched their souls, except that of the traitor Judas. No doubt disturbed their minds when they heard for the first time the words of consecration converting the elements of bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. "This is My Body" and "For This is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (*Matt.*, ch. 26, v. 26–28). It was a most solemn time to give to man the greatest pledge of His love for him, by instituting the Eucharistic Sacrament, in the reception of which man would be united to Christ, and the Redeemer would make His habitation with His worthy recipient. The institution of this Sacrament He intimated when He said, teaching in the Synagogue at Capharnaum: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you." This gift of love fittingly marked the near termination of a life of love, of teaching, and of laboring, for the salvation of sinful man. There was yet one final act to complete that most holy of lives. His sacred career must culminate in a tragic scene in the torturing immolation of the innocent on Mount Calvary. How it must have loomed in the distance and depressed His Sacred Heart, for as He drew nigh to it its contemplation almost overwhelmed Him. His last prayer before

falling into the hands of His enemies reveals His sorrowful, recoiling condition: "My Father, if it be possible, let this Chalice pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." But no, it must be drained to the last drop. His heavenly Father had so willed to satisfy divine justice for the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden to the last sin of the truly repentant. Christ's love for man rose above the fear of the terrible ordeal, and He surrendered Himself to His enemies for a sacrifice of expiation for the sins of men and a sacrifice also of impetration, procuring the necessary graces for the objects of His love to arrive at the happy destination for which they are created. At His betrayal by Judas and apprehension in the Garden of Gethsemane, His disciples fled from Him in utter dismay; Peter alone, well worthy of being their chief, had the courage to follow Him to His trial. If in a gloomy moment he yielded to an indefinite fear and weakened in his fidelity so far as to deny his Master when questioned as to his being a follower of Christ, his defection may be palliated by the natural desire of self-preservation in a hazardous position. The prediction of the Lord was verified that He would strike the shepherd, and the sheep would be dispersed and that Peter would deny Him. This fall was great, but only temporary, for a look from his Master recalled him to his senses and, moved with shame and sorrow for his denial, he went forth and wept bitterly.

The enormity as well as the hateful nature of sin manifests itself in the sad humiliations, the terrible punishments, its expiation demanded in the most perfect and holy of beings, even in the person of the God-man. The mocking and buffeting by the soldiers, the inhuman scourging at the pillar, the most painful crowning with thorns, the carrying of His Cross by the mangled victim, and those hours of agony spent nailed to the cross till He gave His last breath, should fill every one with a salutary fear of committing what in human estimation might be but a light sin, not knowing the magnitude of the retribution it may exact.

Notwithstanding the wonderful signs at the time of the crucifixion, attesting the crucified to be the Son of God; the Sun being darkened, the graves yielding up their occupants who appeared once more in life, and the veil of the Temple being rent from top to bottom, the Jews alone remained impervious to impressions, continued in their unbelief. They even took measures by surrounding Christ's Sepulchre with a military guard to render void His prediction that He would rise from the tomb on the third day. His glorious triumphant resurrection, however, confounded them, but it did not change their perverted minds.

It was joyful news to the disciples to hear of their Master's resurrection. They began to understand more fully the Sacred Scriptures concerning Him and His great Mission, with which they felt them-

selves in some way connected. They recalled, no doubt, many of His instructions, preparing them for their missionary labors when no longer aided by His presence, the great powers with which He had already invested them, and the promise that He should see them again after His resurrection from the dead.

Up to the time of the Sacrifice on the Cross, Christ had but partially instituted His Church. For its completion, together with further instructing His disciples for the conversion of the world, He remained forty days on earth from the time of His resurrection till His ascent into Heaven.

So unsettled were the opinions of His disciples by the recent events in relation to the Redeemer, that the doubts of one of them, Thomas, had to be dispelled by his own sensible proof of the resurrection of his Master from the dead. This favor was granted the doubting disciple, but with an affecting rebuke, when Christ entered the closed room in which the disciples were assembled. This is the second appearance of the Lord to His disciples after His resurrection. At the first, which happened in a similar manner, Thomas being absent, He conferred upon them the wonderful power of forgiving sins. On that memorable occasion, having entered the room where they were, He said to them: "Peace be with you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." When He had said this, He breathed on them and he said to them: "Receive ye the Holy

Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

The night before He died He imparted to them the power to convert bread and wine into His Body and Blood in such a manner as to show His death, or, in other words, to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross. This Sacrament, viz., the Holy Eucharist, is the sequence of an imperative duty imposed by His utterance in a previous discourse, when He said: "Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you" (*Jn.*, ch. VI, v. 54).

The Sacrament of the forgiveness of Sins, or Penance, is intended for the spiritual resurrection of man as often as he may have the misfortune to fall into grievous sin, and thus render him capable of receiving worthily the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. These two Sacraments, together with Baptism, are the chief indispensable means appointed for the eternal salvation of man.

Christ imparted His doctrine to His disciples not in writing but by word of mouth. The narratives in the four Gospels, or New Testament, are mere fragments of His acts and discourses during His public life. The absence of a specially written law in the institution of Christ's Church, is a remarkable feature in the origin of Christianity. A fuller reference will be made to it in a subsequent chapter.

When the minds of the disciples were enlightened by their Master to understand the Scriptures concerning Him; when they remembered the many teachings imparted to them up to the time of His death; and when He had fully instructed them after His resurrection, they were fully equipped, one requisite excepted, for the execution of the great commission: "Going therefore teach ye all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.*, ch. XXV, v. 19–20). The excepted requisite was the communication of the Holy Ghost shortly afterwards received. Giving them the last blessing on Mount Olivet, He counselled them to wait in Jerusalem until He would send them the promised gift, the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth who should abide with them forever.

Who can describe the feelings of joy, of adoration, of love, the disciples experienced as they gazed at the ascending form of their lately crucified Master but now triumphant Lord to take His place at the right hand of God His Father in the Kingdom of Heaven. With cheerful hearts, though separated from their great Leader, they returned to the appointed place of waiting in the city. They spent the intervening days in devout prayer and holy aspirations, to prepare themselves for the worthy

reception of the heavenly Comforter. When on the tenth day after Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit descended with the sound of a mighty wind and sat on the heads of the disciples in the form of tongues of fire, they experienced a wonderful transformation as the effect of His communication. All fear retired from them as they went forth boldly to preach the New Gospel. They were endowed with spiritual strength. Eloquence and unction graced their speech, bringing with facility conviction to the hearers of the truth announced, whilst the power of performing miracles confirmed their divine mission. By the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, completion was given to the spiritual edifice for the salvation of souls and the Church of Christ established for all time.

CHAPTER III.

Dissemination of Christian Doctrine.

IT should not be supposed that though none of His friends stood by Christ at His trial nor at His Crucifixion, save a few, he had not many followers. On the contrary, these were numbered by the hundreds, if not thousands. St Luke relates that on the occasion of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the multitude of His disciples graced His approach with shouts of praise and joy, acclaiming Him as the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord. And many more believed in Him during His sojourn in the city. St. Paul states that after His resurrection He was seen at one time by more than five hundred brethren (1 *Cor.*, ch. xv, v. 6). Many also of the Jews believed in Christ, but from fear of persecution did not publicly profess that belief. But whatever be the number of Christ's followers at the time of His Ascension into Heaven, it was small in comparison with the great mass of the Jews who held aloof, however much they admired His doctrine or were impressed by His miracles. As soon as the Apostles began their labors the tide of conversions set in. To St. Peter

is due the merit and distinction of reaping the first fruits of the spiritual harvest. By his lucid explanation of the Scriptures concerning Christ in his first impressive discourse, three thousand responded to the grace given them and joined the Church, and others followed so numerously that in a short time they attracted attention in Jerusalem. Their simplicity, disinterestedness and brotherly love favorably impressed those who beheld them, whilst the miracles performed by the Apostles completed the conviction that the new religion came from Heaven, had superseded the observance of the Mosaic Law. Hence the new faith soon found many believers, not only in Jerusalem but in the adjacent towns and villages. When the principles of Christianity had been taught and practised in and around the capital of the nation, the Apostles, mindful of the universal commission they had received, diverged on all sides, visiting the distant towns and cities, preaching the gospel of Christ and sowing the seed of His religion. The chief priest and the unbelieving Jews thought to extinguish the light of Christian faith by the crucifixion of its Founder. They soon discovered that although they had killed Him, they had not killed the spiritual seed that He had sown. They now beheld the prodigious growth of the seed in ever-increasing numbers of His followers, causing them the most galling disapointment. They became alarmed at the incessant defections from Judaism seeking admission into the Church. Many devices

they used to suppress the teaching of the new doctrine, but without success. The admirable, unoffensive lives of the Christians disconcerted all the schemes devised against their religion. The practice of the virtues to an unwonted degree was conspicuous in their daily life, whilst the community of goods which they enjoyed produced a favorable impression on those outside of the Church not actuated by prejudiced motives. A desire of closer inquiry was aroused, which in turn was followed by the gift of faith and then conversion.

In the presence of so many conversions and the rapid growth of the Christian Church, the rulers of the Mosaic persuasion became alarmed to such an extent as to have recourse to the most violent measures to repress the new religion. There were fanatics, zealots among them who feared to commit no crime, not even murder, when they thought themselves called upon to defend their own religion or repel assaults upon it. True zeal was not wanting in the Christian ranks, which manifested itself in the boldness with which some of the leaders assailed their persecutors in cutting reproofs for their perversity and inveterate opposition and violence to holy men in past times sent for their correction. St. Stephen was the first to experience their fanatic vengeance, gaining thereby the glorious title of Christian proto-martyr. Their public violence was somewhat restrained by the fear of their political masters, the Romans, whose military garrison domi-

nated the city. Although the Romans should not be considered as defending or countenancing the Christian religion, yet they felt bound in the interests of public order, as well as to make the Jews feel more forcibly their condition of being in subjection to Rome and to curb their lawless tendencies. Nevertheless, though the Jews could not legally exercise the power to inflict capital punishment, they pursued with determined hatred those who had been religiously obnoxious to them. The High Priest and teachers of their law found ready instruments for accomplishing their evil designs in the young members of the observers of the Old Law. They emulated each other in their false zeal; pursuing, arresting and bringing to trial in their religious courts those fearless teachers who gloried in punishment received for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not the least conspicuous of these persecutors of the Christians was a young man of Tarsus, named Saul. Of mental powers surpassing the average, not without a degree of eloquence; readiness of speech and impetuous of action, he offered a most welcome instrument for executing the commands of the rulers of the Synagogue against the observers of the New Law. He consented to the death of St. Stephen, as the narrative of that murder informs us, having early imbibed the Jewish characteristic of bitter animosity against whomsoever attacked or opposed the teachings of the Old Law. As Christianity spread rapidly, it soon found

adherents in the most distant parts of the country; especially in the large towns and cities did its invincible preachers arouse the hostility of the members of the synagogue wherever they went, by the freedom with which they proclaimed the death of the Old Law with the death of Jesus Christ. The rulers at Jerusalem, aware of the commotions in the distant synagogues, delivered to Saul a commission to bring captive to their tribunals the innocent disturbers. He set out for Damascus, a place of importance as to antiquity, population, commerce and the number of Jews observing the Mosaic Law. Here the Christians had established themselves, and against them came Saul breathing vengeance against his religious opponents. His approach was announced in the city, causing some uneasiness to the Christians, for he did not come alone, whilst he was to increase his band from the zealous of the Damascenes for the Law. His erroneous zeal found a new and opposite course for exercise by his miraculous conversion as he approached near to the city. On this occasion, so graphically described in the Acts of the Apostles, he received the grace of a special call from Christ to participate in the ministry of the Church. Great must have been the discouragement of his followers, and the Jews in general, at the defection of so able and vehement a defender of their Law. After receiving baptism and his new commission to preach the Gospel of Christ, he began his labors in the

vineyard of his Lord with the greatest ardor, redoubled zeal and his characteristic impetuosity. Very prudently he kept himself at a safe distance from the vicinity of Jerusalem for some time; for had he been found near the precincts of the Temple, in all probability he would have been immolated as a victim to the fury of his former co-religionists. With the exception of a few of the remote places from Jerusalem, the principal theatre of Paul's labors lay outside of Jewish territory, principally in Greece and the islands of the Mediterranean. His wonderful labors are minutely narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. His missionary career received far more attention than that given to the labors of any other Apostle; not that the others were barren of fruitful works, but owing, probably, to the writer of the Acts being more intimate with St. Paul and having a personal knowledge of what he relates. The meagre written account of the wonderful doings of the others, is amply supplemented by reliable tradition, faithfully transmitted from age to age in the Church which lovingly cherishes the memory of the glorious labors of her Apostolic propagators.

When the good seed of the Gospel, productive of eternal life to those who did not oppose its growth, was scattered throughout Palestine, new fields of labor presented themselves to the Apostles. Like mighty conquerors they went forth to the nations of the earth to bring them into the great fold, the vast

dominion of their heavenly Master. To some were appointed Egypt and the surrounding countries. Others sought more distant lands including Arabia, Persia, India and neighboring States. Of the Apostolic labors in these parts tradition mostly takes the place of history. All of them gained the martyr's crown; even St. John, though he died a natural death, underwent the ordeal to merit it. Neither was their blood shed unfruitfully, as the numbers of spiritual children they left in these nations testify, whom persecution did not diminish, nor the prospect of a torturing death make for an instant waver in their firmly established faith.

The mind follows with more interest the career of those Apostles to whom Europe was assigned, or who made it the theatre of their fruitful labors. Europe, though the least of the then known great divisions of the earth, had long before the institution of the Church, asserted her superiority over the other continents. With her the Arts and Sciences flourished in a high degree, loved and pursued by her progressive inhabitants. Her warrior sons found no equals on the battle-fields outside of her; they conquered wherever they went. One of her nations surpassed all others in great military and political achievements. The Romans dominated the other nations both within and beyond the confines of Europe. Rome, their capital, reigned the mistress of the known world, a few barbarian countries excepted. It was, therefore, fitting that the most

able, the most conspicuous of the preachers of the Gospel should make Europe the field of their labors. Hence, St. Paul, whose aggressive activity against all false systems of religion, whose transcendant intellectual powers and whose supernatural gifts rendered him so distinguished among the leaders of the Christian host, included in the extensive area of his preaching the Gospel most of the refined communities of cultured Europe. If the labors of the other Apostles who worked for the conversion of Europe are not so fully recorded in writing, it should not be inferred that their lives were less fruitful to the Church, for each most ardently desired, was ever ready to sacrifice his life, as nearly all of them did, to propagate the Gospel and increase the fold of their heavenly Master. Their miracles and other great works find a place in the memory through the most reliable tradition in relation to them, especially in the countries forming the scenes of their Apostolic labors.

Antioch had the honor of being the first See of St. Peter, Chief of the Apostles. But so great an enterprise as the conversion of the world to the Christian faith, demanded the most advantageous position for the location of the supreme ruling power in the Church. No other place could compare with Rome in affording St. Peter a suitable site for the establishment of the universal Church. Rome was not merely the Metropolis of Italy, it was also the capital of the whole Roman Empire, comprising

within its limits the principal countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. Her pre-eminent superiority drew to her places of business, her law courts and palatial residences, visitors from all nations. Hence, a notable feature of her inhabitants was their cosmopolitan character. Here the principles of Christianity could be imparted to the civilized and uncivilized of many nations, as from a radiating centre. Here it seemed most appropriate to establish, side by side with the greatest earthly power, the greatest spiritual power, destined to rule and guide the souls of men in all nations till the end of the world. To Rome, therefore, St. Peter transferred the government of the universal Church.

The establishment of the Apostolic See at Rome, honored the city of the Cæsars with a celebrity unequalled by any other of the great cities of the earth. It was then, and had been, the capital of the mightiest political power that has existed since the beginning of the world. St. Peter, in selecting it as the location of the primatial bishopric in the Church, made it also the capital of the Christian world, the city of the popes, in which latter rule she may be truly said to have eclipsed her former reign. Peter was not the only Apostle who wished to make Rome the new scene of his labors. The indefatigable Paul also cast a wistful glance towards the fruitful harvest to be reaped in the city on the Seven hills. The way in which he got his ardent wish gratified could scarcely be described as pre-

arranged by the Apostle of the Jews and Gentiles when he wrote his great Epistle to the Romans. In many fields he had sown the good seed of the Gospel of Christ. He had, moreover, the inexpressible gratification to see it ripen and develop into flourishing Christian communities. Paul had always a kindly feeling for those of his own nation, the Jews, but the latter did not reciprocate his love for them when they found he had renounced their religion and, in obedience to the call from Christ, embraced Christianity. As he hated the Christians before his conversion, so they pursued him with more intense hatred after his conversion that nothing but his blood could pacify them. An opportunity for wreaking their vengeance on him was almost afforded, when Paul, on a charitable mission, visited Jerusalem and was caught by the infuriated Jews at the Temple. His martyrdom was denied him then by the prompt arrival of the Roman garrison. The treatment he received from Festus, the Roman governor, at Joppe, to whom he was sent a prisoner for trial by the Roman Commander at Jerusalem, caused Paul to appeal to Cæsar at Rome. His appeal being granted, he was conveyed, as minutely described in the Acts of the Apostles, to the Capital. There he was destined to receive, with St. Peter, the glorious crown of martyrdom.

CHAPTER IV.

Reception of Christianity by the Nations of the Earth.

FOR many centuries before the origin of Christianity there prevailed throughout the nations of the earth the belief in a plurality of gods. Diverse doctrines found honored teachers and devoted adherents. Almost every nation or people had its own particular gods, and its own distinctive form of religious worship. There were gods in the popular deification of the inanimate and the animate creatures, varying from the creeping reptile to the sluggish ox and ponderous elephant. Some there were of a higher civilization, of more noble and enlightened minds, who rightly thought it beneath their dignity as human beings to offer to such base objects the tribute of their greatest homage, the honors acknowledged to be due to the deity. These satisfied the cravings of the mind for a fit object of religious worship, by forming systems of religion in which the human form of an excelling character was ascribed to the conceived beings worthy of divine honors. Such were the religions of the Greeks and the Romans, the two generally acknowledged most enlightened nations of antiquity.

It should not be thought incredible if even without revelation some of the most developed minds of these peoples should arrive at the conclusion of the existence of one supreme being. Such a belief is attributed to Socrates and Plato. Not only, however, to these eminent Greek philosophers must the belief in the unity of God be attributed, but to many others also. The following quotation from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is given as proof:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice. Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it to them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity; so that they are inexcusable. Because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, nor given thanks: but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened: for professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their own heart unto uncleanness: to dishonor their own bodies among themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather

than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (*Romans*, ch. I, V, 18–25.)

From this passage of unquestionable authority it is evident that men, at least learned men, were not primarily devoid of the knowledge of the Supreme Being, or true God. But not appreciating such knowledge as it deserved, not giving thanks to the Almighty for the enlightenment they received, but rather taking occasion therefrom for conceit and self-exaltation, they became proud, incurring mental darkness, leading to that depravity and abandonment so forcibly expressed by the words of the Apostle.

Another reason may be given for the withholding of the knowledge of the true God by the sages of the world. It would be no slight hazard to innovate in religious matters. If a philosopher, or any man eminent for mental attainments, wished to propagate a new belief according to his convictions, he had to reckon with the disposition of those among whom he intended to sow the seeds of his doctrine. For, as the religion of a nation may generally be said to be coeval with its origin, long-practised ceremonies and religious ordinances are deemed as sacred; so that the introduction of a system opposed to them will arouse the hostility of the people, whose wrath may not be appeased with less than the innovator's head. Socrates with the Athenians affords an example. Few, if any, will be found to expose themselves to bodily injury,

much less to loss of life, for the sake of any evolved system, however cherished.

Briefly, then, the religions prevailing over the earth at the advent of Christianity were such as came under the power of the senses. To eradicate the various systems of false religions was the object of the propagation of the doctrine of Christ. A vast enterprise, universally admitted a superhuman undertaking in the estimation of worldlings and pagan philosophers. Such it would be indeed were success dependent on human power alone, but the preachers of the Christian faith did not rely solely nor principally on human efforts: no, they were equipped with supernatural means, as their mission was chiefly a spiritual one. They did not go forth to conquer the nations for their Master with the might of arms. They did not threaten death, devastation or subjection to those who differed from them, or who refused to accept their doctrine. They did not possess the protection or influence of the great ones of the earth to aid them in the prosecution of their arduous mission. They went forth in humility, with love for all, to cheerfully bear injuries for the propagation of faith in Christ, rather than to offer violence to those who refused to accept it. The characteristic features of the Apostles and disciples of Christ favorably impressed the multitudes wherever they went, because conformable to the ideal of a virtuous being. It was not only the virtuous lives of the teachers of the new religion, however,

that drew forth the willing hearers, but the purity and sublimity of their doctrine, so capable of producing holy lives. People had never heard the like before. Its inculcation of spiritual detachment from the riches of the world that man might enrich himself for life eternal; of self-denial, that renouncing the sordid pleasures of the senses, he might entitle himself to those celestial pleasures for both soul and body in his future state from which no satiety would make him recoil, as is so ruinously experienced by the pleasure lover on earth; of charity and brotherly love, hitherto unknown in the intercourse of man with man, rare cases excepted; a love that enjoined well-wishing and doing of good, not only to friends, relatives or whoever conferred benefits, but also to strangers, even to such as would inflict injury, to enemies. No stranger, no more unexpected, yet no more mind-ruling doctrine, could be enunciated than what the Apostles preached to the peoples of the earth for the first time. It may be reasonably assumed that a pleasing eloquence also graced their discourses, aiding not a little in gaining a favorable reception for their doctrine from their audiences, to be subsequently crowned with the grace of conversion. That Paul possessed this oratorical gift so much desired by public speakers there is sufficient evidence. One recorded instance of its acknowledgment by one of his audience, and that a distinguished one, may suffice. It came to the Apostle, however, not as an applause, but rather as an

undeserved rebuke. It was that of Festus, the Roman Governor, before whom at Cæsarea Paul defended himself against the accusations of the Jews. "Paul," said the Governor, misjudging the speaker, "much learning hath made thee mad." Yet, admitting the valuable accompaniment of an attractive eloquence, to a doctrine so far transcending all existing creeds formulated by the human mind as to evince to a discriminating, unprejudiced judge its supernatural origin; it can scarcely be reasonably doubted that the progress of Christianity would be much slower, the limits of its rule much less extended, and the number of its adherents considerably smaller than they have been, had it, even with the virtuous and edifying lives of its propagators, been the only means for its rapid advancement and glorious triumph.

Another most potent factor was held in reserve, capable of moving the most obdurate to admit its heavenly support and, therefore, the necessity of accepting its teachings in order to merit eternal happiness. This is the power of performing miracles. It contributed largely to the diffusion of Christian doctrine and the establishment of the Church among the nations. Yet this palpable proof of divine power did not always convey conviction to the prejudiced spectator. It is credible that many regarded true miracles as merely the performances of magicians. Such would appear to be the case in many of the martyrdoms in which Christians were repeatedly

preserved from harm when exposed to modes of torture which in ordinary cases caused death. Some of the occurrences produced by the incantations of the magicians were so wonderful as to make one infer their power of inducing a superstitious people, and such as were not educated, of which condition were the great majority of all nations both before and long after the establishment of Christianity, to ascribe to their human authors a supernatural power. The Egyptians, especially, advanced the magic art to a high degree of proficiency. The Magi who contested with Moses and Aaron before the court of Pharaoh, as recorded in Scripture, produced such wonderful results by their magic arts as to bear the closest resemblance to true miracles. They were finally, however, forced to yield to the Hebrews, acknowledging the divine power in the workings of the servants of God. So in the days of the Apostles there were some who practised the art with much success. They generally came to grief when they came in contact with the preachers of the doctrine of Christ. The case of the magician Barjesu, at Paphos, in Cyprus, is a notable instance. He tried to nullify the effects of Paul's preaching the Christian doctrine to the Roman Proconsul, Sergius Paulus. He thereby incurred the just wrath of the great Apostle, who struck him blind for perversely opposing the truth. The Proconsul required no further argument for conversion. He immediately sought and gained admission into the fold of Christ.

To the power of working miracles may be rightly attributed to a great extent the rapid progress in its first age of Christianity. It silenced all active opposition, except that of the wilfully obdurate; it overawed all minds, both revered and irreverent, and it afforded to the wavering, doubting mind an irresistible motive for conversion.

Yet, with so much in its favor to commend it to universal acceptance, it should not be thought that Christianity had little to contend against. Although the people of any country might, as isolated from the influence of those more deeply interested in the national religion, manifest a favorable disposition towards Christianity because of its evident superiority over all other religions; yet, under such influence, no such favorable disposition could be relied upon. It could hardly be expected that religious principles tenaciously adhered to, ceremonies practised for ages, would be abandoned without a struggle at the preaching of a new religion, whose declared aim was the overthrow of all others. The priests, who derived their maintenance from the performance of the sacerdotal duties in the false religions, may naturally be deemed hostile to the advance of Christianity. There were others, also, almost equally interested in the maintenance of those religions. The temple, as well as the private dwelling, displayed the craftsman's skill in its material ornaments. To the tradesman dealing in religious articles, then, the intimation of the approach of

Christianity must have sounded as a threatened invasion. St. Paul's experience of the silversmiths of Ephesus, affords an example of how the manufacturers of religious articles elsewhere might be expected to receive the preachers of the Gospel of Christ. The Apostle caused a commotion among the Ephesian silversmiths, whilst they, in turn, caused a commotion in the city against the zealous intruder, manifestly in their own interest, to secure a continuance of their revenue from religious sources and in the interest of their unconscious goddess, Diana. Had the preachers and members of the Christian Church no other enemies but these to encounter, no great anxiety for their safety might be felt, provided they had the protection of the civil power to assure them. But, in the denial of this protection, lay the danger to the believers in the new doctrine.

As long as the Christians were few in number they excited but little hostility in the ruling classes, civil or military. But when the good seed of the word of God, fructified by the operation of the grace of God, the number of believers in Christ, at first small, was multiplied manifold. They made their presence felt not only in the towns and cities of the provinces of the Roman Empire, but Rome, the Capital, awoke to a sense of being confronted by an ever-increasing host, that threatened to supplant the long-practised worship of Jupiter and inferior fancied gods with the worship of the true God with

the Most Holy Trinity of persons. As the increasing numbers of the Israelites caused grave apprehension to the powerful Egyptian, so also did the Church of Christ, ever fruitful in augmenting the number of her children, give disquieting alarm to the mighty Roman. And, as in the former case, cruel and inhuman measures were employed to repress the growth of the Hebrews, so unmerciful edicts went forth from the Roman emperor to stifle that of Christianity. Willing minions, and those interested in the maintenance of false religion, were ready to carry those into effect with unheard-of tortures. Then began the greatest religious struggle the world has ever seen. In vain was the art of persuasion practised on the neophyte, or recently baptized Christian; in vain did the wily Roman try the dazzling reward for abandonment of the faith in Christ; in vain did he apply fire and sword to stem the tide of Christian heroes. No army went forth to battle animated with confidence of victory as did those Christians to receive the crown of martyrdom.

In the great persecutions of the first three centuries of the Christian era, although the repressive measures used compelled the Christians to perform the rites of their religion privately in the catacombs and other places remote from the public gaze, yet they completely failed, not only to extirpate them, but even to diminish their number. The blood of the martyrs it appeared rendered the vineyard of the

Lord still more fruitful in producing a new and larger host to take the place of those immolated.

A religion ennobled by so many heroic victims for their faith, aroused the desire of a closer and unprejudiced study of it among the learned and influential. The result was an influx to the Christian fold at different times of the higher classes of Roman society. Members of it might be found in the most noble families, even the imperial household did not escape being imbued with its tenets. Every branch of the government, even in the storms of persecution, could show its Christian contingent. They abounded in the army. Maniples, centuries, cohorts and legions bore a Christian character. The defenders of paganism became dismayed. But whilst the imperial eagle hovered over them they had hope of stemming the Christian tide. How foolish for man to subdue by physical means the minds of his species in religious matters! But they were far removed from that advanced civilization and intellectual progress which condemn religious persecution, and innately inculcate that toleration is the best policy.

It is rather strange that men of ordinary knowledge did not perceive the futility of the most horrible repressive measures to diminish the followers of the Cross, and take prudent ones to remedy the evil of unjust condemnation to excruciating tortures. The crisis for Christianity had passed, that of paganism had to come. Though slowly, it was surely approach-

ing. When Christians in considerable numbers were found in every class of society, they could no longer with safety be despised. They were dreaded.

The chief element of danger to the believers in the gods lay in the military. When Cæsar fell in the Senate by the assassin's dagger, he left to aspirants to imperial honors the most dazzling position —that of swaying the greatest of empires. The claims of heredity to fill the lofty throne of the Cæsars were very often ignored. That honor was generally awarded in later times to the man of the army's choice. But the vast extent of the empire, together with the unsettled condition of some of the conquered provinces, necessitated the maintenance of more than one army. Hence, in the reluctant exits of the emperors from their stormy pinnacle of earthly glory, there were sometimes as many candidates for supreme power as there were Roman armies. This rivalry not only constituted a menace to permanent peace, but considered in relation to the growth of the Christian element in the military, it must have caused some uneasiness to those characterized with zeal for the worship of the gods. Naturally, the Christian soldiers would unanimously support the officer who favored Christianity, casting a wistful glance towards the crownless throne of Cæsar.

For three centuries after the Christian era Roman paganism had been successfully preserved by the emperor, the soldier, and the citizen, from overthrow

by her dreaded foe, Christianity. The long, bloody line of persecutions told more impressively of a hatred to be satiated only with the most inhuman species of torture than ever disgraced a civilized community, and in comparison with which the proscriptions of the Marian and Syllan factions must yield the palm for inhuman atrocity.

Paganism had seen its halcyon days. It had seen, with impotent rage, the inefficacy of its fiendish devices for stifling the growth of Christianity. It had yet to be the sad, abased witness of its own overthrow with the triumph of the Cross.

CHAPTER V.

Triumph of Christianity over Paganism.

FOR three centuries the Christian Church stood successfully the crucial test of persecution. Instead of being diminished, the vast increase of the number of her members in all the nations of Europe as well as in the principal ones of Asia and Africa, afforded much consolation to her rulers and zealous sons, when remembering her many temporal losses by the martyrdom of her fairest children. The character of the reigning emperor might be taken as an index to the treatment of the Christians, for his time at least, which, for the majority of emperors, was of short duration. Some were of a more tolerant, humane disposition than others. Though from the best of them the Christians had little to hope for, yet from some they had nothing to fear: they were not all blood-thirsty. At the beginning of the fourth century a novel spectacle presented itself to the subjects of the empire. Seven ambitious aspirants contested for imperial honors. They were Maximian, Severus, Maximin, Licinius, Galerius, Maxentius and Constantine. They had all distinct, separate commands. They were all, as far as known,

the last excepted, pronounced pagans. None were so divinely gifted as to foresee the issue of the struggle so favorable to Christianity. Constantine was the most youthful as well as the most interesting to Christians, as to his future character and the condition of the Church in the event of his triumph over all competitors, if his career should not be shortened by unexpected defeat. Though not a Christian he had Christian blood in his veins, his father, Constantius Chlorus, the commander of the Roman army in Britain, being a pagan, but his mother, the saintly Helena, being a devout Catholic. To him are attributed distinguishing natural gifts, both of mind and body; gracefulness of person and great intellectual power, a general feature of those occupying the first rank for great human achievements. When a youth he was given by his father as a hostage for good faith, first to Diocletian, and subsequently to Galerius. This must have been a most undesirable position to a young man of Constantine's capabilities and disposition, yet he succeeded in gaining and retaining the esteem and good will of the persecutors. His father having brought on fever in an expedition against the inhabitants of North Britain, Constantine asked and obtained permission from Galerius to visit his dying parent. At his father's death at York, he was immediately proclaimed Cæsar by the unanimous voice of the armies of Britain and Gaul, A. D. 306, thus elevating him to an eminence hazardous, though

dazzling, for so young a man, and bringing him into a condition of relations resembling to a degree that of shrewd Octavius at the death of Julius Cæsar. It could hardly be expected that peace could long be maintained, when so many powerful rivals jealously watched each other to take advantage of any incident or circumstance productive of personal aggrandizement.

Maximian and Severus were the first to test their military skill and strength on the field of battle. Severus was defeated, but Maximian did not long enjoy the fruits of victory, for, incurring the hostility of his own powerful son Maxentius, for intriguing against him, he was banished into Gaul by the latter. There his evil genius found occupation in plotting against Constantine. Being guilty of conspiracy the second time against the commander of the legions in Gaul and Britain, young Cæsar caused him to be removed. Strangulation ended his dishonorable career. The death of Galerius in A. D. 311, reduced the number of imperial candidates to four. Of these the most powerful and conspicuous were Maxentius and Constantine: upon them all eyes were turned. A hostile meeting between these ambitious and powerful rivals was regarded in the state of affairs as inevitable. Only a plausible cause of conflict was wanted. Maxentius found one in the strangulation of his parent by the orders of his rival, though he himself had sent his father into exile for intriguing against him.

Only superior discipline, long service in Gaul and Britain could inspire Constantine with any reasonable hope of success. When learning of the declaration of war by Maxentius, he led his small army of 40,000 men against that of his rival numbering 160,000. Constantine's march into Italy recalls that of Julius Cæsar, taking the same direction, against Pompeii and the Senate. And, as on that occasion the celerity of Cæsar's movements disconcerted the scheme of his enemy, so the intrepid advance of Constantine over the Alps with a small army to meet Maxentius in his own territory must have caused the latter some uneasiness, not to say anxiety, notwithstanding the vast numerical superiority of the forces under his command.

Being a true pagan Maxentius followed the usages of Roman commanders going forth to battle. He consulted the auguries that he might know the disposition of the gods, if they were favorable, and was assured of obtaining a complete victory. Having made extensive preparation to insure success in the struggle for supremacy, he led forth his vast army to battle, but not far, as Constantine had arrived at the Mulvian Bridge only two miles from Rome, where he had taken up a good position. No results so important attended any military encounter since the memorable battle at Pharsalia. It was not the interests alone of the contending leaders that gave unusual significance to the approaching engagement. Behind the thought of the ambitious

commanders there was another, less prominent, but far more engrossing and far reaching, affecting the inhabitants of the empire; it was the effect of the issue of the struggle on religious worship.

Maxentius might be said to represent the cause of Paganism. He was profusely supported by the worshippers of the gods and cheered by them to the combat. On the other side it was no secret that Constantine, though not professing Christianity, yet favored the Christians. These considerations gave rise to diverse speculations to the two great religious divisions of the empire, pagan and Christian, concerning the future situation, and caused many on this account to be interested in the issue of the approaching engagement. Constantine, before arriving so close to the city, knowing the imposing array of the enemy, could hardly escape a doubt of victory crowning his martial efforts, though seconding a fearless courage by the skilful disposition of a prudent commander. He also sought the aid of the Deity but not that of any pagan god; he prayed for success to the God of his devout mother, Helena, to the God of the Christians; for not long before the battle he was favored with a vision in which he was instructed to place at the head of his army a new and strange standard for a Roman army, and victory would follow. The standard was not the familiar eagle of Jupiter, but the cross; the sign of the Redeemer of men. At different times in the course of her existence Rome beheld deadly conflicts both

within and beyond her walls. The encounter between the well-disciplined army of Constantine and the immense host of Maxentius taking place almost in view of her citizens, eclipsed all others both in magnitude and results, affecting the religious condition of the subjects of the empire.

The battle, which was fought on the 28th of October, 312, resulted in the complete overthrow of Maxentius who perished in the Tiber. It would be attributing too much to the victor to ascribe his great victory wholly to the superiority of Constantine and that of his troops over Maxentius and his scattered legions. The cause must be sought elsewhere. Maxentius had not merely numerical superiority over his rival, but his army was also composed of reliable veterans. The thoughtful reader of history will, therefore, have no hesitation in acknowledging the operation of an invisible force, transcending all human power, giving victory to Constantine.

Rome lay at his feet, whilst the western portion of the empire acknowledged him as its master. The conqueror entered the capital in triumph with his victorious followers on the day of battle. The Labarum, or standard surmounted with the cross, dethroned and replaced that of Jupiter in the Capitol.

The triumph of Constantine was the triumph of Christianity. Its members could after so many repressive measures, confiscations and persecutions breathe the air of true liberty.

Constantine did not immediately issue the edict granting them liberty of worship; he wished to act in concert in the matter with his colleague in the empire, Licinius, who ruled the eastern portion. They met at Milan, where, acting harmoniously, they published the edict giving to the Christians equality of liberty in religious matters with the pagans.

It was the cause of much rejoicing to all classes of Christians throughout the world. Paganism, however, was not dead, it might be rallied with ease by some enterprising leader, for it claimed still the bulk of the subjects of the empire. To attempt to restore it to its pristine glory in the west, at least, would be surrounded with such peril, with Constantine supreme, as to deter the boldest from leading in its cause.

Even in the eastern part of the empire, where circumstances were more favorable to it, the altered condition of things after Maxentius' defeat demanded a policy of moderation from the ruler, if he hoped to preserve it from an overthrow similar to what it had experienced in the west. Such mild government was not to be expected, however, from Licinius. He may have been fired with the ambition of reigning supreme in the empire, and for this purpose provoke a quarrel with his powerful colleague in the west. He may have anticipated trouble from the conqueror of Maxentius, and resolved beforehand to strengthen his position.

To gain popularity he renewed the persecution of the Christians, a mode of winning pagan support congenial to a pagan emperor, but a means to be eschewed at all times by a good, humane ruler, and one which would hardly be utilized by any prudent sovereign in the altered condition of affairs in the west.

This course of action aroused the indignation of Constantine, for it was a direct violation of the edict of Milan granting liberty of worship to the Christians issued conjointly by the emperors. Besides, it might be easily understood as a rejoinder to the new policy favorable to the Christians inaugurated by Constantine. If the Christians might justly regard Constantine as their champion, the pagans could find in Licinius, their greatest leader, a persecutor of the Christians and zealous avenger of neglect of the gods. Such a perturbed state of affairs could only be expected to terminate in war. Both sides made extensive preparations for the decisive struggle which would make the victor supreme ruler of the whole empire. This strife, unlike previous hostilities, bore a religious character, and may appropriately be termed a religious war, than which no struggle sways more effectively the inferior element, the passions in the conduct of men.

Constantine, finding Licinius determined to violate and ignore the edict granting liberty to the Christians, put his legions in motion to enforce it by the sword. The armies of the opposing emperors met

at Byzantium, where, after a well contested battle, the Licinian host was put to flight, A. D. 323. Though defeated, Licinius was neither overthrown nor subdued. Constantine does not appear to have moved with Cæsarian celerity in the pursuit in order to crush all further attempts at opposition.

The defeated emperor resolved to retrieve his loss by the recent defeat. Time and means were not wanting to encourage him with the hope that Jupiter's eagle might yet soar triumphant over the standard of the Christians.

He soon found himself at the head of a considerable force, and the following year his army had increased to such an extent as to inspire him with courage and confidence in the contemplated renewal of the strife for supreme power. The hostile emperors met a second time at Chalcedon, where a decisive battle was fought, A. D. 324, with the complete overthrow of Licinius, who was forced to acknowledge Constantine his master. The conqueror, it is stated, gave his vanquished enemy a promise that his life would be spared. No light stain is attached to the character of Constantine by the violation of this promise, for shortly afterwards the unfortunate Licinius was put to death.

Whilst not attributing much scrupulosity to Constantine in political matters, it would be well to know and consider the existing conditions and circumstances of the time, before judging so unjust and merciless a crime apart from extenuating cir-

cumstances. The existence of Licinius would, in all probability, be a source of uneasiness not only to Constantine but also to the empire. Imprisonment in a fortress might, in ordinary cases, be deemed a sufficient measure for safety; but in the case of a prisoner of such ability and popularity as Licinius, it could hardly be judged adequate for removing all causes capable of effecting the liberation of the prisoner. Officials are not incorruptible, and history attests that bribes offered irresistible temptation to men esteemed far beyond moral corruption.

Licinius, though dethroned by defeat, retained his place in the hearts of the pagans; whilst he lived there was hope to them of the re-establishment of the worship of the gods and the overthrow of Christianity. Wealth was not wanting to his adherents to exert its influence in his liberation when it should be undertaken. Veterans and innumerable recruits would flock to his standard at the first intimation of his escape, and then the horrors of civil and religious war would be fiercely renewed.

It is probable that the weighty motive of securing the good and peace of the empire alone influenced Constantine in putting his imperial captive to death, if he be the cause of Licinius' death as related in history.

By the overthrow of Maxentius, Paganism received a mortal wound; by that of Licinius, its death-blow.

The emblem of Christianity shone brightly over the vast empire when Constantine laid aside the sword to give peace to the many nations acknowledging his sway. For three hundred years the Christian Church evidenced by her gory wounds the terrific onslaughts of her most powerful enemy. The smile of victory graced her amiable countenance as she gazed over the expansive field of battle, strewn with the statues of the gods. Now, at length, she could look forward to a period of much needed repose. Her worst foe had to yield and acknowledge her victorious.

Paganism once overthrown could never afterwards regain lost power, nor ever hope to debase the minds of those who had received the true faith.

Constantine, after his victory over Maxentius, manifested in many ways his desire for the welfare of the Church. Though no Christian, few Christian rulers have ever equalled him in protection and generosity toward those of their own faith.

The property of the Church had been confiscated under pagan emperors: all this he caused to be restored to her. Other boons were conferred upon her: her clergy were exempt from public functions. The Church always compassionated those deprived of liberty, and when in her power raised the slave to freedom. Such freedom was, under Constantine, acknowledged by the civil power. The divisions of the army were provided with chaplains to attend to the spiritual wants of the Christian soldiers. Dona-

tions and legacies to the Church were approved of and encouraged. The revolting gladiatorial spectacles were prohibited as unbecoming a civilized people and contrary to the teachings of the Church. The due observance of Sunday also found a zealous promoter in Constantine. Henceforth capital punishment by crucifixion was prohibited by edict. These are some of the beneficent fruits of the policy of reformation pursued by Constantine when the din of war had died away, affording him leisure to attend to the internal reorganization and prosperity of the empire.

Though favoring Christianity, Constantine granted freedom of worship to all his subjects. He forbade the persecution or molestation of any man on account of his religious principles, thus inaugurating an era of religious freedom unknown to the nations. The author of so great favors to the Church of Christ as well as benefits to humanity, strange to say, deferred his formal conversion to Christianity to the last days of his life, receiving baptism only shortly before his death.

The Church victorious over external enemies, was now forced to labor for internal peace threatened by some within her fold.

CHAPTER VI.

Heresy.

AMONG the means designed for consolidating His Church, Christ gave special prominence to the necessity of unity among its members.

St. John relates the affecting prayer he offered to his heavenly Father to preserve His Church from the evils of division, and to grant that the spirit of perfect agreement should reign continually among its members, thus distinguishing them from all others as His true disciples. The history of the Church testifies to the great necessity for spiritual union, and that our Saviour's prayer was not superfluous.

So numerous as well as ancient have been the disagreements in matters of faith, that they are coeval with the Apostolic age, leaving their baneful marks on almost every century of the Church's existence.

St. Paul complains bitterly of the dissensions in the Church, which he had established at Corinth. "Now I beseech you, brethren," writes the Apostle, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: that you speak the same thing: and that there be no schisms among you: but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment."

The same Apostle, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, labors strenuously for the same object, their preservation from false doctrine or heresy. "But I fear," he writes, "lest as the serpent seduced Eve by his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted and fall from the simplicity that is in Christ." And verse 13th: "For such false prophets are deceitful workmen transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ, and no wonder: for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light." Subsequently, in the same epistle, he narrates his own trials and sufferings for the sake of the gospel of Christ to counteract the evil effect of the boasting of false teachers.

St. Paul, it seems, apprehended more danger and encountered more hostility, from those whom he designated false teachers, than the average share of the Apostles. One cause of this opposition may be found in the character of the people among whom he principally labored; they were Greeks, or those morally and otherwise affected through intercon-verse with the Greeks. In his reference to the Athenians, he mentions some of the characteristics of the Hellenic race. They were curious, seekers of novelty and fond of discussion. History does not speak otherwise of this remarkable people. The democratic principles of their nation, though they had lost national independence, contributed largely to the disposition of investigating, discussing and finally disputing over subjects affording topics of

conversation, coming naturally or accidentally, otherwise presented by the faculties of ingenious, long-practised mental purveyors. They were of the land that gave birth to a Socrates, a Plato, a surpassingly intellectual Aristotle and an eloquent Demosthenes. The tongue was to them both an instrument of pleasure and a powerful weapon in fierce combat.

Their religion resembled that of their more powerful rivals, the Romans. They had their Zeus, corresponding to the Roman Jupiter, and an imposing array of inferior deities invested with supernatural qualities to suit the popular demand and the spiritual cravings of the human heart, which had not yet arrived at the plane of its adequate satisfaction in the knowledge of the true and only God. Such a people would naturally regard new systems of belief as religious innovations evolved from the abstruse studies of philosophers, and subject them to a methodical investigation not always accompanied with respect or reverence for the new doctrine. Bearing this in mind, it may be easily understood how the Athenians received the principles of the Christian doctrine from St. Paul in their national assembly, the Areopagus. Their levity on that occasion, in the reception of the enunciation of the principles of the true religion, manifested itself in remarkable contrast to the respectful and reverential manner in which they were received elsewhere.

Being of a fickle disposition, it was not at all surprising to find those of them who had embraced Christianity investigating the merits of the new doctrine in the fluctuating mental disposition peculiar to them. A reasonable and not unnecessary cause may, therefore, be attributed to St. Paul for writing so much in an epistolary manner to the churches which he had established among the Greek-speaking portion of his converts to Christianity. He felt, no doubt, anxiety for them in his absence, lest false teachers should enter the churches which he had established and corrupt the pure doctrine which they had received from him. Yet the Greeks were not the only portion of the Church from whom internal trouble might be apprehended. Error and heresy have found distinguished authors, as well as active propagators, in many lands. They are to be found in almost every century of the Church's existence. Even in the first century appear the Simonian, the Cerinthian and Ebionite heresies. Subsequent centuries were still more prolific in their crop of heresies. Some were of slight importance in producing any detrimental effect on any great portion of the faithful, much less on the whole Church. They may be termed local secessions from true Christian doctrine, being for the most part confined to the districts or regions in which they had their rise, such as those above named. Others were of a more dangerous nature, of a widespread tendency, exercising a bane-

ful influence, not merely in the nation or district in which they arose, but over a large portion of the Church and among all classes.

The greatest of heresies was Arianism. Arius was a Libyan by birth. He possessed mental ability above the average. His natural endowments he supplemented by practical acquisitions, an attractive and persuasive eloquence together with a studied affability. Exterior austerity, so impressive in the lives of the saints of the early Church, was not neglected. Hence, Arius presented an apparent character worthy of the appreciation and commendation of the good. Yet, underneath this pious exterior, these distinguished mental attributes, there lurked a deep-seated ambition, an unbending pride. His first offence he committed when a deacon by obstinately sustaining the Meletian schism. Remonstration was lost on Arius. His spiritual superior, Peter, patriarch of Alexandria, found it necessary to use extreme measures and excommunicated him. But Arius was not without friends, and Peter dying, Achilles, his successor, removed from Arius the sentence of excommunication. Arius thus found a friend in the patriarch Achilles, who subsequently conferred upon him the dignity of the priesthood. It is alleged his self-esteem raised in him aspiration to the patriarchal see at the death of Achilles. The choice of the Alexandrians, however, did not honor Arius but Alexander with the patriarchal dignity. Irritated with disappointment and deeming it oppor-

tune to assert an opinion contrary to orthodox faith which he had conceived and cherished, he astounded the synod of Alexandria by boldly denying the divinity of Christ. Alexander, hoping to lead back to orthodoxy his erring priest, tried the effect of mild, paternal treatment to a turbulent son. Arius, however, persisting in his heresy, remaining obstinate to all persuasion, the patriarch judged it expedient to refer the case to a national council. One hundred bishops condemned his infamous opinion and excommunicated Arius. Though severed from communion with the Church in his own country, the heresiarch did not despair of seeing his cherished opinion prevail and obtain recognition in the sum of Christian belief. He repaired to Palestine, where it is alleged through misrepresentations he obtained episcopal absolution from his excommunication. Whether through deception or not he was absolved, it cannot be denied that he found zealous supporters among the members of the eastern episcopacy.

Natural mental endowments enhanced by studious acquisitions, the mastered subtleties of philosophic argument succeeded in seducing some minds of good disposition, representing to them error under the colors of truth.

Arius determined to enter upon an ecclesiastical campaign of huge dimensions. Like a prudent strategist, he studied where he might assail his enemies more easily and with reasonable hope of possible, if not probable, success.

Nicomedia offered the most desirable theatre for promoting the success of Arianism. Thither he betook himself. Soon he won the favor and support of its bishop, Eusebius, and through the latter gained the protection of Constantia, sister of Constantine, the emperor. This was no slight advantage.

The prospects of Arianism began to look bright. In the meantime the heresy caused such commotion in the east, that a general council was universally regarded as the decisive authority for settling the question.

Arius, knowing the import of a decision of such an assemblage, made all preparation possible to win favor from the fathers of the council and their approbation of his doctrine. He had estimated the nature and extent of the opposition to his opinions. The Church had lately emerged from the stormy times of persecution, when it was extremely difficult for Christians to apply themselves to profound study, to make those mental acquisitions which procure the public estimation of being learned. But if the bishops had not the deep and varied knowledge of their modern representatives, they had, however, the orthodox Christian faith, sincere, exemplary piety, a keen perception of the true from false doctrine.

Being men of holiness, they believed in divine inspiration to precede human learning in the solution of questions regarding matters of faith. Arius exhibited a remarkable contrast in his character to

that of the bishops who were to be his judges. He relied principally for the success of his innovation upon human efforts. Shrewdness and adroit tactics were brought into requisition to win the good will of all those capable of influencing the decision of the council. Especially did he rely upon his own ability to bring, by philosophic, convincing arguments, the fathers over to his side. It may be readily understood, therefore, that neither fear nor hesitation made him dread the summons to appear before the three hundred and eighteen members of the episcopacy, who formed the Nicene Council, to be heard and hear its sentence. If the majority of the bishops were more noted for virtue, firmness of faith, and in general for sanctified, Christian lives, than for rare mental acquisitions, yet there were some among them who were no mean scholars, who availed themselves of human learning to develop and render more efficient their natural gifts. Several distinguished for their attainments would be found ready when called upon to enter into the arena of mental contest against the gifted heresiarch.

No labored effects, however, were required of any of the mitred prelates. There appeared on the scene a young man destined to act a conspicuous part in a troublous time of religious commotion. This was the celebrated Athanasius, then a deacon of the Church at Alexandria. He accompanied Alexander, his patriarch, to the council. Not less gifted than Arius, of transcendent mental acquisitions the

result of profound study, of eloquence attractive and impressive and a most formidable dialectician, Athanasius presented a dreaded opponent to the astute heresiarch.

When the council ascertained definitely the opinion upon which it was convoked to pass judgment, an opinion denying the divinity of Christ, a primary principle of Christianity coeval with its foundation and so dearly cherished by its members, there appeared a spontaneous unanimity to proceed, without waiting for arguments, to a summary condemnation of Arius and his impious teaching. It was no secret, however, that Arius had many friends, not only among the inferior clergy, but also among the members of the episcopacy. These could scarcely be satisfied with a mere condemnation without being previously led thereto by convincing argument. The fathers of the council, for many reasons, deemed it prudent to allow Arius to adduce proofs in support of his novel and disturbing opinion. Arius felt gratified as well as confident of success. His assurance, however, was rudely shaken by the refuting arguments of Athanasius. Met at every point by the able deacon, he had to retire discomfited from the struggle.

Though vanquished, Arius was not subdued. But his case was lost. The deliberation of the council found no obstacle in arriving at a decision adverse to the arraigned. His doctrine was pronounced heretical and accordingly condemned.

Excommunication fell upon the heresiarch and his adherents so that, as far as the Catholic Church was concerned, a reasonable hope was entertained of peace in the future, the cause of trouble being removed. Sad disappointment, however, darkened the bright prospects. Though prostrate in the dust at Nice, Arianism was not dead. It soon recovered to such an extent as to give serious trouble in different quarters. Even in the council there were found two staunch supporters who were willing to go into exile with its author, rather than abandon its distinctive tenet. These were Theonas, bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, bishop of Plotemais, who refused to sign the formula drawn up by the council declaring the Son to be true God, born, not made, and consubstantial with the Father.

In connection with Arianism there appeared a new element asserting its right in the disposition of religious controversies of an exacting nature. Different motives may be alleged for Constantine seeking to bring peace internally as well as externally to the Christian fold. However good and well meant his purpose, yet the interference of the civil or military power, though it may have been gratifying to the troubled rulers of the Church to be aided by the secular authority to give effect to the decision of the Church by banishing those who had been condemned for heresy or schism, must be regarded as purely assumptive on the part of the civil powers, not at all of right or capable of producing the de-

sired effect, a fruitful universal peace, as if religious tranquility should be obtained by means of the sword.

It is a dangerous privilege to admit the interference of civil authority in religious affairs, even in the punishment of those condemned for heresy or otherwise, because the same power may be turned against the Church if the ruler should change his opinion and, becoming favorable to the heresy, persecute the members of the Church, which actually occurred in the course of the Arian heresy.

Powerful intercession and subtle persuasion soon made themselves felt on Constantine's mind in behalf of Arius and his heresy. The emperor turning against the Church, threatened with banishment the Catholic prelates who might not receive the heresiarch into communion. Thus Arianism for a time became triumphant, being well supported by the secular power. Constantine's favor towards Arianism was gained by his compliance with the dying request of his sister, Constantia, who had, not long after its inception, embraced the Arian heresy. None of the faithful bishops complied with the Emperor's mandate.

Alexandria was the centre of opposition to Arianism in the east, even supported and advanced by imperial power. Its patriarch, Athanasius, the redoubtable enemy of the heresy, being deposed by a synod of Arian bishops, assembled at Tyre, was sent into exile.

Arius endeavored to occupy the Alexandrian See, but in vain. The populace continued firm in the true faith, faithful to their banished prelate, so Arius was again disappointed in his hope of being installed in the coveted Alexandrian patriarchal office.

At length a heretical synod of servile bishops, held at Jerusalem, admitted the heresiarch into communion. The emperor seconded this act of recognition by ordering that Arius should now be received in communion by the Church at Constantinople, the capital of the empire. This caused its holy patriarch, St. Alexander, to protest against his reception as an unholy intrusion.

Arianism now appeared in the ascendant, with its author about to be honored in the principal city of the empire. But alas for human calculations! The reception never took place. The sudden and horrible death of the heresiarch prevented it. No eye witnessed the tragedy, but a pool of blood surrounding his corpse, with the entrails protruding, suggested the work of despair.

Though its author was dead, Arianism lived, manifesting signs of vigorous vitality. Some of the successors of Constantine proved themselves its zealous and powerful protectors.

Great vicissitudes brightened or darkened the path of the Catholics or Arians, according as the reigning emperor favored the one or the other. An unholy scheme had been formed by the leaders of the heresy. They designed to expel all Catholic

bishops from their sees and fill their places with Arian prelates. The Arian emperor, Constantius, gave the aid of imperial power to the project.

Few Arians labored more strenuously than he for the subversion of Catholicity and success of Arianism. Catholic bishops were banished for their firmness in the true faith, and Arians installed in their places over unwilling flocks. Thus Arianism became triumphant. It domineered everywhere. It controlled in Church and state. In its triumph, however, its weakness soon manifested it to be of human origin, and not divine.

A church without a divinely appointed head cannot long exist. Dissensions completely rent it. Some were, for approaching in belief more closely to Catholic doctrine, denominated semi-Arians, whilst with others the angle of divergence became greater or less from Arianism, according to the views of its sectional leaders.

At length a desire of unanimity appeared. Many distinguished Catholic bishops labored effectually in withdrawing their erring brethren from Arianism, or in forcing them from their wrongly acquired positions. The imperial arm being withdrawn from its support, it gave evident signs of decadence.

Theodosius the Great, desirous of peace to the church and the empire, gave Arianism its death-blow. Its adherents were ordered to restore all churches to their rightful owners—the Catholic prelates. Arian assemblies were forbidden in the

capital, and, finally, all were required to profess the Catholic faith. Thus ended, as a menacing power, though existing for a considerable time afterwards, the most formidable and dangerous heresy the Church has experienced.

CHAPTER VII.

Government Consolidation of the Church.

EVERY community, every social body must have a head, otherwise the objects of the union of its members would be unattained.

Neither peace nor order would reign, neither the welfare of the individual nor that of the community, neither protection from enemies within, nor from those without. All would be in disorder, all in confusion. The intelligence and knowledge of a community enable it to perceive the necessity for committing its general welfare into the care of one supreme ruler.

The history of nations and communities, of men in all ages, attest the necessity and wisdom of having a supreme ruler.

The Church of Christ, though of divine institution, yet is a vast community, a social body, and, therefore, like other societies, it requires for its government one supreme, visible ruler, otherwise for its preservation and the attainment of the object, for which it was instituted, a theocracy would be required. But the communications of the Deity with man, under a sensible form, for the

ruling of a community has been vouchsafed to nobody, except to the Jews, for a short period in that people's national existence.

If Christ did not promise divine direction to His Church in a visible manner, He did, however, promise to be with her to the end of the world. *Matt.*, XXVIII, 20, and that the Holy Ghost would teach her all truth and abide with her forever (*John*, XIV, 16). But, that Christ intended and appointed temporal government for His Church, cannot reasonably be doubted. Excelling all men by the union of the divinity with His humanity, He must be acknowledged the most perfect organizer that can be conceived. Hence, the Church which He founded could not be deficient of any principle deemed essential, not only by the learned and wise for the welfare and continuance of any society, but also by those of average knowledge and intelligence. Therefore, did He inaugurate the chief magisterial office in His Church by appointing St. Peter its first ruler. Such is evidently the import of His words, addressed to that disciple, viz.: "Feed My lambs: Feed My sheep (*Jn.*, ch. 21, v. 15–17). Hence, the prominence of St. Peter in important deliberations or meetings of the Apostles.

The condition of the Church, in the first three centuries of its existence, rendered it very difficult to exercise the supreme pastoral Authority effectively for the restoration of peace and religious

harmony in the various parts of Christendom, when disturbed by doctrinal innovators from within.

The slowness of travel, and the consequent tardiness of communication between the head and the subordinate rulers of the Church, afforded to the propagators of new opinions the opportunity of doing much injury among the Christians, susceptible of new impressions, without the faculty to discriminate between true and false teachers.

The stormy times of the persecutions of the Christians, under infidel emperors, caused a still greater impediment to the regulation and direction of churches situated far from Rome.

In those days, when the popes had to perform the duties of their exalted office in concealment, through fear of the sword, or tortures by those who thirsted for their blood, it would be too hazardous to hold public council to check the spreading evil, and punish effectively by excommunication or censure the refractory members of the Church. Hence, in this condition, a latitude for the exercise of authority, in their respective jurisdictions, necessarily accompanied the investiture of prelates, with the episcopal or patriarchal dignity. Yet, even in the perilous times of the early persecutions, more than sufficient evidence exists in the appeal to Rome, by contestants in ecclesiastical disputes, to convince us of the Roman Church being acknowledged superior to all others, and the Pope the supreme Judge of the Universal Church. A few

cases may be mentioned in verification of this assertion.

Polycarp, in the second century, the most reverend and authoritative in the eastern church, consecrated bishop by St. John the Apostle and placed by the Apostle over the Church at Smyrna, referred to Pope Anicetus for a decision regarding questions concerning the paschal date. Conforming in word and practice to the custom at Rome and in the west, he was the means of bringing back many of the faithful who had been deceived by the persuasion of Marcion and Valentinus.

The action of the universal Church leading to the condemnation of the first great heresy—that of Arius in the council of Nice—renders conspicuous the supreme authority of the Roman See. Over this, the first Œcumenical Council, presided the legates of Pope St. Sylvester I., viz.: Osius, bishop of Cordova, and the priests Vitus and Vincentius. This plainly shows the established acknowledgment of the supremacy of the pope by the episcopacy, for there were no complaints of it being a usurpation, nor did any other prelate advance a claim of rival precedence.

When Arianism, through its condemnation by the council, seemed to die away and lose its vitality, it was afterwards revived by its crafty author and his friends; having gained the favor of Constantine, it directed its principal assault against Athanasius its most able opponent.

This brilliant luminary of the Church, who has given us that clear and comprehensive compendium of Catholic faith in the creed which bears his name, could hardly hope to escape the storm of the Arian clouds gathering thick in the east and fulminating with the imperial power. Alexandria may be called the citadel of Catholicity in the east. Its learned and beloved patriarch, Athanasius, presented a galling and invincible foe to the heresy. The occupants of other sees might be gained over by deception, persuasion or the fear of imperial displeasure, but the patriarch of Alexandria was known to be impregnable to all advances; no sophistry could ensnare him, no bribery or promise could entice him, no imperial disfavor could make him swerve from the path of conscientious duty. In the reign of Constantine, having incurred the imperial displeasure by refusing to enter into communion with Arius, he was sent into banishment like several other Catholic prelates who refused to be tainted with heresy.

By Constantine II. and Constans the banished prelates were recalled and restored to their sees, but Arianism had gathered strength and raised a storm against the imperial reaction. Athanasius was compelled again to separate himself from his flock, and the Arians having invaded his patriarchate, taking forcible possession of the Catholic Churches, installed one of their number, Pistus by name, as bishop of Alexandria. Subsequently, A. D. 341, the Arians held a synod at Antioch, where Athana-

sius, whom they had already compelled to abandon his see, was formally deposed from the patriarchate and Gregory, an Arian, was consecrated to occupy the coveted see.

Athanasius finally turned to Rome, appealing to the Pope, as the ruler of Christendom, to impart justice to the wronged and restore order and peace to the eastern portion of the Church. He was not the only applicant to the successor of Peter for redress. Several other prelates, notably Paul of Constantinople, Lucius of Adrianople, and Marcellus of Ancyra, besought the Pope to use his supreme pastoral authority and restore the invaded sees to their rightful occupants.

The heart of Pope St. Julius was affected at the sad state of the eastern portion of the Christian fold. He caused the charges for deposition made against the appealing bishops to be examined by a synod held at Rome for that purpose. The charges being found false and groundless, Julius gave judgment in favor of Athanasius and the other bishops despoiled of their sees, and at the same time condemned their self-constituted judges of the Arian Synod, held at Antioch, as abettors of heresy. The Arians, however, showed no signs of yielding, but held tenaciously to the usurped bishoprics. With the hope of making a favorable impression by an imposing display and to strengthen their position, they held a Council at Philippopolis, where they renewed their hostility to St. Athanasius, repeating

the sentence of deposition which their Arian Synod of Antioch had pronounced against him.

The influence which this display of Arian strength might produce on those whose support would be most welcome as well as valuable, was more than counteracted by the assembling of a council of western Catholic bishops at Sardica, A. D. 343 and 344. This council reiterated the sentence condemning the Arians previously pronounced by Pope Julius at the Roman Synod. As the council was sanctioned and its decree confirmed by the Pope, the emperors willingly gave their support to it, not merely for the peace of the Church, but for that of the empire also. The Arian intruders were compelled to retreat from the usurped sees, which were restored to their Catholic incumbents. Thus his loving and beloved flock had the happiness to be again united with the Alexandrian patriarch, the saintly and illustrious Athanasius.

These are but a few of the instances showing the acknowledgment by the eastern division of the Church as well as the western that the Pope was regarded in the early ages of the Church, as in later times, the chief pastor of the Christian fold.

There is a tendency in Christian denominations outside of the Catholic Church to characterize as an assumption the claim or practice of supreme jurisdiction over the universal Church. Besides the principle that no social, religious or any other species of community can exist without a head, it is

evident from the instances given above that the chief pastoral control of Christ's Church on earth is no modern assumption by the occupants of the Roman See, but an inherited right of the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed the first chief pastor.

As officers entrusted with a separate command, whose forces operate in distant parts of the theatre of a great campaign, enjoy the exercise of a less limited authority, than when in close proximity to the commander-in-chief, but, yet operating with unity of purpose, having the same final object in view, the victory of the whole army, so may the state of the Church be regarded in the first three centuries of its existence. To the bishops, scattered in various countries, and far from Rome, were ascribed discretionary powers in the spheres of their jurisdiction. Yet each knew that he had a superior, the chief pastor; that he had to labor for the good of the flock committed to him, and thereby the good of Christ's Church in general.

In those times of violent persecution, by the pagan emperors, many difficulties attended a recourse to the Pope, and the public exercise of his supreme authority might be truly deemed a hazardous performance. Naturally, in such a state of dispersion of the bishops, from the ruler of the Universal Church, disputes would sometimes arise on religious subjects, contentions and dissensions would banish peace from some portion of the fold, as happened

so often in the eastern division in times of violent commotion. Unless there be a supreme tribunal to decide upon disputed religious questions, the maintenance of peace and order would be hopeless in the disturbed quarter; for, where all the prelates are alike in authority, or nearly so, there is room for jealousy, for intrigue, for the practice of artifice and ingenious persuasion by the principals in the subject of dispute, as actually happened among the members of the episcopacy during the Arian heresy.

The triumph of Christianity over paganism inaugurated an era of both comparative peace and consolidation. The peace, however, should be understood in relation to those outside of the Church, for otherwise it could scarcely be applied to the state of the Church in the fourth century, when warring and distracted with heresy. Consolidation came as the result of organization, whereby the episcopal pastors of distant flocks were brought into closer communion with the head of the Church. To effect this in the West, which comprised, by far, the greatest portion of the Christian fold, no great efforts were required.

From the establishment of Christianity in the western countries of Europe, its members regarded with filial devotion the occupant of the Roman See: they received with veneration the communications emanating from him, as from the divinely appointed shepherd over the entire flock of Christ.

Consequently the work of bringing them into closer external relations with the Pope met with no serious impediment.

The disposition in the east cannot be characterized as similarly commendatory. There a certain coldness, not to say indifference, manifested itself for affairs of the western division of the Church.

The little interference by the Pope, with the government of their flocks, may have fostered in some a spirit of wished-for irresponsibility to the chief pastor. Yet, notwithstanding the signs of ambitions, together with the desire of precedence, which characterized the conduct of some, no one preferred rival claims to the office of supreme ruler of the whole Church, thus acknowledging the indisputable position of the Roman Pontiff.

The worst enemy of Catholicity, since the time of pagan emperors, was the Arian emperor, Constantius, who used both physical power and artifice to supplant Catholic faith by Arian heresy. For a time the siren of fortune smiled upon the imperial efforts, and, no doubt, enticed him on with the hope of complete victory which, to all appearances, was within his grasp. He began the campaign by an attack on St. Athanasius, the champion of Catholicity in the east, and dreaded by all Arians.

An assembly of bishops at Arles reluctantly, but servilely, complied with the emperor's desire in pronouncing the condemnation and deposition of Athanasius. Pope Liberius, however, refused to

sign the unjust decree, and convoked a council at Milan to reverse the sentence of that of Arles. Not to be frustrated in the accomplishment of his most cherished project, Constantius appeared before the council as principal accuser of Athanasius. He failed, however, to impress the bishops with an impression of the justice of his cause.

Bribery and artifice, so characteristic of the environs of the palace at Constantinople, then and for centuries afterwards, were summoned to the aid of the imperial arms. They also failed, finding no congenial soil in the minds of the bishops. Finally, with a last, forlorn hope, Constantius, resolving to try the effect of menace, entered the council with drawn sword and ordered the prelates to sign the sentence condemning Athanasius. Thus intimidated, the bishops had the weakness to yield against their conscience to the tyrant's threat. Only three, the occupant of the See of Milan and the two papal legates, had the courage to refuse their signatures. But the work of a council requires the approval of the Pope. Constantius, therefore, caused the document bearing the bishops' signatures to be taken to Pope Liberius for his signature also. But the Pontiff was indignant at the effrontery of such a request and refused. For this opposition to the imperial will, the fearless Pope was sent into banishment as well as those who had courageously refused to sign the document.

Arianism was now in the ascendant. The principal sees, now in Christendom, were occupied by Arians.

To consummate its victory, as well as the apparent overthrow of Catholicity, Felix, declared by some to be of sound Catholic faith, by others an Arian, was made pope, and took the place of Liberius at Rome. This triumph of Arianism, won by the sword, was of short duration.

Like all heresies, it soon became the prey of dissensions. In vain did the emperor endeavor to restore union to its diverging factions. At his death, in A. D. 361, Julian the Apostate, by recalling the Catholic bishops from exile and placing them near the Arians, who had been intruded into their bishoprics, hoped to embroil them, and so contribute to the destruction of Christianity, which he desired.

Some of the distinguished Catholic bishops, perceiving his evil design, frustrated it by pursuing a course of charity toward their erring brethren. By this means, and the exercise of a prudence, dictated by sound wisdom, many were brought back to the profession of the Catholic faith.

After experiencing many vicissitudes, Arianism found another and ardent, as well as unscrupulous, supporter in the Emperor Valens. The persecution, which the Church suffered under him, failed in its object, like all others.

The vitality of Arianism had been mortally assailed by the dissensions which tore it asunder.

To restore unity, vigor and stability to it, was beyond human power. It was gradually approaching extinction, when a new emperor, unfavorable to it, accelerated its death.

Theodosius, desirous of the general welfare of Christianity, as well as that of the empire, saw that this could not be attained, as long as a heresy was sustained, contrary to the doctrine received from the apostolic times, opposed to scriptural teaching and to pious sentiments of all devout Christians. For the sake of peace, therefore, and the good of Christianity, he determined to put an end to it in the manner related in the last chapter.

Arius conceived and first taught the heresy. It chiefly depended for success on the secular power. Constantius was its warmest and most powerful supporter. When the imperial power was withdrawn, it collapsed, though lingering in some countries for a considerable time afterwards.

If Constantius had applied himself with as much zeal to the discharge of the ordinary duties of a good ruler, for the benefit of the nations under his sway, instead of acting a principal's part in religious strife, how much more profitable for himself and his subjects, he would have used the time of his reign. He would, thus acting, gain the affections of the peoples under him, merit the esteem and tributes of honor from posterity, afford a noble example to other rulers, both contemporaneous and those in after ages, not to speak of the reward of the

just Judge to the deserving temporal ruler, instead of meddling with matters that did not belong to his office, afflicting Christians with grief and punishment for non-compliance with his mandates of religious dictation, and so justly deserving from those of his own time and from posterity the hateful name of a religious tyrant.

In the vacillation of some of the bishops under the threats of Constantius, the noble conduct and undaunted courage of Christ's vicar relieves the sad ecclesiastical picture. Pope Liberius could not be gained by the astute Constantius. Imperial pleasure, displeasure or menace failed to move him. Faithfully did he guard the flock committed to his care, faithfully did he discharge the duties of the highest office filled by man.

When the strife of Arianism had ceased an era of peace and prosperity appeared to dawn upon the Church. In all parts of Christendom was felt the necessity of a closer union with the head of the Church. In the times of persecution, though the supremacy of the Pope was admitted on all sides, his authority was seldom exercised in places far from Rome. Hence the prelates presiding in such places were expected to act in cases of gravity with deliberation, great prudence and Christian charity. But toward the close of the fourth century the obstacles to the free exercise of the Pope's authority had been mostly removed. Patriarchs, primates

and other prelates were brought into closer relations with the head of the Church.

The consolidation of the spiritual edifice after surmounting so many trials, with the vicar of Christ directing, afforded universal conviction of its divine origin, and hence absolute confidence in its guidance to salvation.

The great mission of the Church had, both from within and without her fold, been greatly impeded. This is the conversion of the nations of the earth to Christianity; the path to these was now considerably cleared of obstacles, and she turned with ardor to the accomplishment of her great mission. In its prosecution she could implicitly rely upon the good will of a favorable Catholic emperor and the filial coöperation of her zealous sons.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Church Fulfilling her Mission.

"AS the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (*Jn.*, ch. 20, v. 21). "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.*, ch. 28, v. 19–20). Such was the commission given by the Redeemer of men to His eleven Apostles before He ascended into heaven; such the mightiest mission ever intrusted to men to accomplish. How faithfully and successfully the Apostles and their co-laborers and successors executed this great commission in the first three centuries of the existence of the Church, though encountering the worst of obstacles, the deadly hostility of the ruling element in the greatest of empires that have ever existed, history attests. In wonder and amazement the mind contemplates the prodigious growth in that period of the little timid body of believers, within the limits of Jerusalem, at the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost. Not long after that event the towns

and cities of Judea could not contain the ever-increasing additions to the numbers of the new religion.

Christians in numerous bodies were found in the principal countries of the empire. They flourished in the islands of Greece, in the other islands of the Mediteranean. They abounded in Spain and North Africa, and also in Gaul. Italy was being rapidly Christianized. They swarmed in Rome, the capital of the empire, where the Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, founding his see, made it also the capital of Christendom.

Pagan Rome rose in all its armor against the audacious invader of the realm, conquered by the mistress of the world. All her physical assaults were found unavailing to check the progress of the spiritual foe. Province after province became permeated with the new and strange doctrine. The proud capital herself, notwithstanding the holocausts and lesser sacrifices of Christians by her devoted sons to her inattentive deities came, at length, tremulously to acknowledge submission to her amiable conqueror.

The standard of the father of the Gods had to vacate its enthronement for that of the Saviour of the World. The cross vanquishing the imperial eagle, surmounted the city of the Tarquins, the Republic and the Cæsars. This in time of persecution and attempted extermination. What might be expected of the Christian religion in time of comparative peace when the power of victory accom-

panied her, when valiant lovers tendered their obsequient service? Alas! the lover of the cross may hang his head in shame. Scores, if not hundreds, of bishops were required in Northern Africa in those days of persecution to superintend the spiritual affairs of the Christians of that region. How many are there now?

It is reasonably credible and generally admitted that Asia furnished many adherents to the Christian religion in the time of the Apostles. The successful labors of St. Thomas in that quarter of the world are unquestioned.

Where, now, is the productive result of that Apostle's strenuous efforts, and those of his immediate successors? If we except the Europeans and their descendants, who have established their homes in that continent, how many of the hundreds of millions of human beings are Christians? Very few. How many of the inhabitants of North and South America, of Australia, would be Christians if intrepid explorers had not discovered and traversed them? Yet the commission to the Apostles and their successors is: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations," etc. But it must be admitted that the teachers of the Church had many difficulties to contend against. Outside of the Roman empire, which it conquered, the Church engaged in the hazardous work of converting the barbarous and semi-barbarous nations to her faith. Long-established usages had to be treated with great prudence, superstitions

to be overcome. The hostility of the privileged classes, particularly that of the religious one, could not be unexpected, for to them the successful assault of Christianity meant either conversion or a precarious existence. In few words the establishing of Christianity in each barbarous or half-civilized nation, either outside or slightly connected with the Roman empire, might be regarded as the miniature of the great struggle of the Christian Church with pagan Rome. There were some exceptions to national hostility to the preaching of Christianity to the inhabitants of a country for establishing the Church among them. Some received it not merely with respect, but with reverence and immediate acceptance of its doctrine for the attainment of that future state of glory which, for the first time, it announced to them.

Perhaps the inhabitants of Ireland accorded the announcement of the Gospel of Christ the most cordial reception which it received from the nations coming into the fold. England also gave it an encouraging introduction.

The sowing of the seed of faith in new fields, where the light of the Gospel had not yet penetrated, as it was the great duty assigned to her by her divine Founder, so it was the work which the Church kept constantly in view. In its accomplishment, however, she met many impediments. These may be truly said to have arisen not solely or principally from without, but mostly from within her fold.

In the eastern portion especially, where the Greek element predominated, the periodical luxuriant growth of cockle in the vineyard of the Lord engrossed the strenuous efforts of the husbandman, so that zeal for missionary labors in that quarter, for the conversion of the densely peopled countries of Asia, viz, India, China, etc., almost seemed a thing of the past. In the west existed a striking contrast. There that zeal characteristic of Apostolic times continued to show itself in all grades of the Church, from the Pontiff in Peter's chair to the lowest in the clerical element. There the missionary was ever ready at his superior's order to bear the light of faith to those distant lands immersed in the darkness of infidelity and idolatry. Nor did the prospect of the martyr's crown check his advance nor cool his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. Many rather coveted the glorious crown by intrepidly prosecuting their precious labors in the face of threats and many dangers.

Spain and Gaul, like Italy, had received the Christian faith in the first century. In the course of time, by its rapid advance, Christianity supplanted the false religions hitherto prevailing there, so that these nations enjoyed the benefits and distinction of being Christianized long before the other nations of Europe. Beyond these idolatry still held its debasing sway. To the east and to the north lay nations inviting zealous missionaries to spiritual conquest.

The troubles of the Church, inflicted by persecutions from without and by heresies from within, had greatly retarded the work of promulgating effectively the Gospel of Christ to these nations, but when she entered upon a time of comparative peace, it was in her power to give that attention long wished by her to the fulfilment of her mission—the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness, and to affording them the means of acquiring everlasting happiness.

The most remarkable, also the most important, spiritual conquest of the Church in the fifth century, was the conversion of the Irish nation. The manner of its coming to the light of faith and the paucity of means in the work of conversion, give to the labors of St. Patrick, its Apostle, a character little, if anything, short of the miraculous. History testifies to the spontaneous reception which the Irish gave to the preaching of the Christian faith among them by this illustrious servant of God. St. Patrick had the happiness to bring, aided in his labors by some of the converts, the nation under the amiable yoke of Christ. Ireland, in respect to its instantaneous conversion to the Christian faith, occupies a unique position among the nations that have embraced Christianity. But if their spontaneous acceptance of Catholic faith impresses the mind with astonishment, not less does admiration affect it at the extraordinary tenacity with which they clung to it in the most trying circumstances during times of

direful persecutions. The reader may find this verified in the historical narrative of their condition in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries, when their fidelity to their faith experienced a crucial test.

Another great conquest by the Church was the conversion of the English nation, which began toward the end of the sixth century. To St. Austin is given the merit and distinction of being the first to bring a considerable portion of the English into the Catholic fold. His success was partial. He was sent by Pope St. Gregory I., both being monks of the same order, the Benedictine, the oldest of religious orders established in the west. Austin and the forty monks of his order who accompanied him, when in 597 they arrived in Kent, met a favorable reception from Ethelbert, its King, one of the seven ruling the English Heptarchy. Long before this event, and before the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland, missionaries had visited these countries, but little success attended their efforts. Austin confined his labors to Kent and Essex, whose kings embracing the Christian faith, their example was soon followed by their subjects. Austin did not live to see the conversion of a great portion of the island, his death occurring in 605.

At the end of the seventh century, however, nearly all of the people were included in the Catholic fold, Sussex being the last to enter, receiving the faith in 709. But the work of conversion was not entirely left or due to the efforts of St. Austin and his monks.

A considerable portion of the inhabitants owed their conversion to the labors of the Irish monks who had been invited by Oswald, King of Northumbria, for that purpose from the island of Iona, which had already begun to spread its fame as a seat of piety and learning. From this sanctuary went forth zealous missionaries to Caledonia, or North Britain, to conquer by the cross the fierce inhabitants of that region. Most gratifying results attended their labors.

The whole island of Britain being converted to the Catholic faith soon began to vie in the sanctified lives of its people with the sister isle, Ireland, which had already, in the seventh and eighth centuries, evinced her missionary spirit by sending several of her apostolic sons to different parts of the continent of Europe to diffuse the light of faith to those still in spiritual darkness dwelling there. Britain's sons also looked abroad for fields of labor wherein to exercise their zeal for their divine Master.

There were yet vast fields in northeastern Europe whose warlike, idolatrous people offered most worthy objects for missionary enterprises. Of those who undertook the spiritual conquest of these people, the most illustrious of the missionaries who went from Britain and Ireland to this new field of labor, was the Anglo-Saxon priest Winifrid, or Boniface. His ardent zeal for souls impelled him to visit Rome in order to obtain the Pope's authority for preaching the Gospel and spreading the faith among the

various tribes of the Germans. In this great work his success surpassed expectation. The barbarians flocked around him to hear the new doctrine with the result that idolatry was soon abandoned for the Christian worship of the true God.

The wonderful progress of Christianity under Boniface and his assistants in the conversion of the Germans, deserved from Rome the authorization of the establishment of the hierarchy. Boniface, desirous of the continued spiritual prosperity of the peoples he had converted to the Lord, made a visit to Rome to see the Pontiff. Pope Gregory III., learning the unusual acceptance of the Catholic faith by the Germans, felt no reluctance to grant the establishment of the hierarchy in the country whose inhabitants had successfully resisted the Roman legions of former times. This truly apostolic man had yet another gem to add to his crown of glory, that of martyrdom. Boniface seeing the pacific state of the tribes he had been instrumental in bringing into the fold of Christ, resolved to fulfill a vow which he had made many years previous to the establishment of the hierarchy in the country of the peoples he had gained to Christ.

The Frisians were to the north; to these he determined to carry the light of faith notwithstanding the many dangers to be encountered in laboring for this savage people. Thus in his old age, for he was then seventy-five years old, Boniface did not hesitate to undertake the conversion of

another people, and thereby make another addition to the Kingdom of his Saviour. He dreaded not the prospect of martyrdom. He received it joyfully in 755; but, no doubt, the luxuriant crop of the future harvest of souls springing from the martyr's blood, cheered his last earthly moments before his soul's flight to its heavenly home.

By the fruitful apostolic labors of Boniface the spiritual rule of the Church was greatly extended, with the probability that the few remaining barbarous tribes or nations inhabiting the north and eastern portions of Europe would speedily find their way into her fold.

With the establishment of Catholicity among the German tribes and other nations not yet amenable to the laws of civilization by an entire severance from the tenacious grasp of barbarism, an onerous duty developed upon the local rulers and teachers of the Church. With the acceptance of the Catholic faith there came the necessity of a reformation of morals, the abandonment of customs opposed to the spirit of Christianity. Usages of immemorial practice not essentially injurious to it, yet of a tendency to impair its purity, cannot be prudently assailed with holy indignation aroused by religious zeal, but must be passively borne till they become supplanted by others more in harmony with Christian life.

As the state of civilization transcends that of barbarism, so the morals of barbarians are much

beneath those practised by civilized people. To effect a change from the lower to the higher state required time, prudence and patience in the reformation of character, in ages of slow progress when the inventions and appliances of modern times were unknown. Upon the Church devolved the duty to convert the nations not only from false belief and heathenish worship, but also to convert them from systems of corrupting and debasing morals to a sound Christian morality. This office she had already successfully discharged towards the fierce, passionate hordes who had made irruptions at different times into the Roman Empire, and finally overthrew it in A. D. 476.

To such barbarians might alone seemed the only principle of authority, and the rule of the most powerful to be honored and obeyed. When the seed of Christian faith engendered fruit in their minds, a wonderful transformation took place in their character. They learned to discriminate between power exercised according to justice, and power directed by passion or used for personal aggrandisement or unworthy objects. They learned also that the source of supreme power existed in Heaven, that God ruled the world. They became convinced that the justifiable acquisition of goods as well as their moderate use was preferable to rapacity and the enjoyment of ill-gotten goods. The teachings of the Church made known to them that love for one's neighbor excells in its amiable

fruits, both in the life on earth as well as in the future state, the destructive passion of hatred. Their Christian faith demanded also of them humane treatment of prisoners and the vanquished in all justifiable wars. To effect these changes in man's character required more than human means. The Church alone was able to accomplish the transformation of character. The duty of civilizing the nations of the earth was implied in the great commission she had received from her divine Founder. Wherever she erected the sign of man's redemption, there her humanizing, civilizing influence diffused itself in all directions like the rays of the sun. She fostered learning by encouraging the erection of local schools in which she was generously aided by the coöperation of some of her royal sons. Among these patrons of learning Charlemagne on the Continent and Alfred, of England, deserve prominence. This primary effort to disseminate knowledge gave an impetus to the desire for mental culture, and foreshadowed the great institutions called national universities whose establishment the Church promoted in later times for the higher education of all classes. These institutions still remain attended annually by thousands of students mentally equipping themselves for success in the various professions they have chosen for their earthly career. They stand also as monuments to the zeal of the Catholic Church for affording the means of mental development, of encouragement to the study of the most

profound and abstruse subjects in the various departments of science and art. The nations which possess these great and ancient institutions of learning, may be justly proud of their priceless treasures.

In the ninth century almost all Europe lay within the spiritual rule of the Catholic Church. By the indefatigable labors of her missionary sons, the nations were converted and brought into her fold. By her directive policy they pursued their temporal and spiritual welfare. Their rough, barbaric character received the transforming touch of Christian refinement, influencing them to a higher civilization. The face of Europe seemed changed. False religions had disappeared. The towering cross evidenced the triumph of Christianity everywhere. The success of the Church in this quarter of the world had been most gratifying; her prospect into the future most brilliant.

But what results attended her labors in other quarters of the world for the commission she received from her founder—the teaching of all nations? Two causes may be stated for impeding the conversion of the rest of the known world. These form the subjects of the two following chapters.

CHAPTER IX.

Greek Schism.

THE Greek element in the Christian Church attracts notice from Apostolic times. Many causes may be alleged for their drawing attention. In the first place the Grecian republics, preceding in civilization the other nations of Europe, though small in size, yet by their great superiority in the arts of war and peace, made themselves both feared and respected by the more numerically powerful nations. As a result from their excelling condition, their language appeared worthy of acquisition to many members of other nations, who, for many reasons, sought for knowledge in a closer study of the Grecian character. Not the least cause was the thirst of knowledge which the famous philosophic establishments of Greece promised to satisfy. The pleasing reasonings of Socrates' elevating philosophy, could hardly fail to find admirers abroad as well as disciples at home. The great philosophic works of Plato and Aristotle would be eagerly sought by the learned of other nations besides those of Greece. Their political works offered most desirable literature to legislators and all who had

chosen statesmanship or politics for their career. Being for the most part close to the sea, or islanders, the advantages of commerce drew many to the occupation of international trading. The Greeks also founded colonies. By all these means the Greek language extended the sphere of its use. It became the language of the learned, and also the general medium, especially in the east, for effecting the transactions of commerce. Long after Greece succumbed to the conquering Macedonian their language survived, affording a general medium for social, commercial and international communications.

These remarks upon the language of Greece may help to explain the reason of Greek being so extensively used at the time of the establishment of Christianity. It was not neglected by the Jews, who ostensibly disregarded whatever savored of Gentilism. So popular and extensively spoken was it that the evangelists, though Hebrews, selected Greek as the medium to convey to the world the sacred writings of the Gospel. It may be easily understood that all those Christians who spoke Greek were not Greeks, but, yet on account of their language, were regarded by other nations professing Christianity as a distinctive people or element in the Christian Church.

As the Greeks, when an independent nation, were noted for a characteristic propensity to disputation and discussion, so those of the eastern portion of the

Christian Church, denominated Greeks, appeared to have inherited or assumed this Hellenic feature. Some of them whilst accepting the Christian religion, tried to change or modify some of its principles, so as to bring it more extensively, if not entirely, within the sphere of reason. Hence the many heresies that arose in the eastern division of the Church. There is scarcely a mystery of Christian faith that has not been assailed at some time by some restless, disturbing members of the Greek element in the Church. Even in the time of St. Paul symptoms of divergence from sound doctrine became so manifest as to draw from the Apostle the chastisement of bitter rebuke. These contentions among the Greeks produced their baleful effects upon the Christian religion in the east. It was hopeless to expect any extension of the Church on the greatest continent of the earth in such a deplorable condition of its eastern division. Consequently, the conversion of the nations of Asia to Christianity was neglected. No missionary spirit was there. It had long ago taken its flight to the west, where it found willing laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, to fire for conquest with its breath.

Another cause that directed commendable regard to the Greeks was the sanctity of some of their prelates, their intrepidity in the presence of many dangers in guarding the purity of Christian faith from the malign spirit of corruption. The sanctified lives of St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, St. Basil,

St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Athanasius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. John Chrysostom and many others, impart a redeeming feature to the general unpleasant character of the Greek division of the Church.

Yet, with all their love of innovation, the Greeks continued till the eleventh century in their union with the rest of Christendom, recognizing the Pope as successor to St. Peter and ruler of the whole Church. More than one cause operated in effecting their separation from the main body initiated by Photius, an unscrupulous usurper of the Patriarchal See at Constantinople. The transference of the imperial seat of government from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine, tended to weaken the central influence exercised by the Pope over the whole of Christendom.

It struck down Roman or Latin supremacy with a single blow. It gave the ascendancy in Church and State to those of the Grecian race, and all who spoke Greek as their native language. In fact, it created a new condition both unexpected and apparently without motive, and also unseemly because of the nationality of the author. It called forth a revival of all that was Greek to the detriment of whatever was Roman or Latin. The act does not indicate that Constantine entertained much love for Italy or its capital. Constantinople soon became a hotbed of intrigue, plots and crime. Many of the emperors of the Greek empire, which succeeded in

diminutive dimensions the great Roman empire, distinguished themselves more as religious tyrants than as aspirants to the glory of the warrior engaged in a just cause or the love of subjects grateful for beneficent rule. If a zealous patriarch distinguished for his attachment to the Roman See as the center of unity and a fearless reprover of unsound Christian morality as St. John Chrysostom, the hostility of the Constantinopolitan populace or banishment was awarded for displeasure to the imperial court. Yet, all acknowledged, however reluctantly, the right of Rome to rule in religious matters all Christendom. Hence, in the general or Œcumenical Councils, the legates of the pope always presided over these august assemblies. But the long series of religious contentions, heresies, etc., had weakened respect for legitimate religious authority especially, and emphasized the antagonism of races between Latins and Greeks.

The way was slowly but surely being prepared for throwing off the spiritual supremacy of Rome. The anti-Roman sentiment had to be aroused with prudence and nurtured with patience, in order that it might be productive of the desired result. The consent of the majority of the eastern or Greek bishops was deemed necessary to an authoritative declaration of any patriarchate having equal authority to the Roman See. Photius was the first to make the bold attempt. In one of these passionate outbursts of the mob, or of the emperor, that fre-

quently occurred in Constantinople, against the virtuous and saintly occupants of the patriarchate of Constantinople, Ignatius, patriarch in the reign of Michael III., was banished from his charge by that emperor in A. D. 858. Photius received the appointment to the office of the banished patriarch.

All such appointments were subject to confirmation by the Pope. The audacity of Photius was not to be checked by the fear of a refusal. He applied to Rome for the necessary confirmation. Pope Nicholas I. refused his consent to the appointment of the usurper, for Ignatius had neither been tried nor convicted by any authoritative ecclesiastical court. Then Photius appeared in his true character—of opposition to the supremacy of the Roman See. He boldly declared that Rome should not dictate to Constantinople; that it had no authority superior to that of the latter in religious questions. This previously unheard-of pretension by another see of equality with Rome, regarded as the mother of all Churches, astounded all Christendom.

Though the ruling element in Church affairs in the east had not yet descended to such a degree of decadence and subservience to the imperial will as to support the claim of the usurper, yet his action sowed the seed of religious discord between the eastern and western divisions of the Church.

Although Photius had not the slightest foundation to warrant success in his anti-Roman movement,

yet the subject was deemed sufficiently important to require the action of a council to decide upon it. He soon found his condition rather precarious in the city of Constantine. There, a political revolution having taken place, its victorious party, being adverse to the religious agitator, forced him into exile. The Council convoked to restore peace and harmony at Constantinople is the eighth Œcumenical Council of the Church. Its members, mostly Greek, in A. D. 869, condemned Photius and his claim put forth for Constantinople assuming spiritual authority equal to that of Rome. Affirming the primacy of the Roman See, they proclaimed it supreme in Christendom.

This decision of the council apparently settled the question, but the seed scattered by Photius was not killed. He still possessed friends at Constantinople and no little influence at the fickle imperial court. When Ignatius, the rightful patriarch, died, Photius was recalled from banishment and installed in the patriarchal chair. This caused fresh commotions at Constantinople. Again he became the object of unpleasant attention, and falling into imperial disfavor, he was banished by Leo the philosopher. His life of many vicissitudes to himself and injury to the unity of the Christian Church, closed unsuccessfully in exile in A. D. 891. By the council the unity of the Church was preserved; by the death of the usurping agitator, the cause of trouble was removed.

To the lovers of the Church and all interested in her prosperity, the prospect into the future appeared most cheerful. Great prudence, however, had to be exercised by the Popes in approving the appointments to the patriarchate of Constantinople. They exercised so great influence among the members of the eastern episcopacy, and being able adroitly to use effective persuasion on the emperor, their fidelity to Catholic principles should be clearly known before their advancement to so high a position.

The patriarchs in general were dutiful to Rome, some of them manifesting their zeal for the prosperity of the entire Church, were not unworthy of their high office.

But the current set in motion by Photius had, in the course of time, steadily extended its dimensions till, at length, it required but a fostering hand to give it such a width as to render it an impassable barrier between Rome and its Greek ecclesiastical province. The hero of this religious feat was Michael Cerularius, patriarch of Constantinople in A. D. 1054.

In time Photius found a worthy successor. The work of separating the eastern or Greek portion from the main body of the Church of Christ inaugurated by Photius, was thus consummated by the assent of the eastern bishops, whose predecessors, in a general council, had proclaimed the supremacy of the Roman See. This is known as the Greek Schism. This separative act marked the

complete decadence of sound Christian religion in the east. It also tended to the rapid disintegration of the Greek empire.

A powerful enemy to Greek power had already wrenched many of the fairest provinces from Greek rule and menaced the rest. The martial Mohammedans could not be repelled by the effeminate Greeks, more noted as participants in frequent squabbles at Constantinople, or prone to taking interest in religious questions savoring of heresy or schism, than willing or able to protect their property when invaded by the enemy.

By their secession from the great body of Christians, sympathy with them in their danger became greatly lessened if not wholly alienated. As might be expected they offered but a feeble resistance to the united forces of Mussulmans, who advanced to the gates of Constantinople. The strength of its ramparts preserved the shadow of an empire for centuries before the complete annihilation of the Greek power by the Mohammedans in the fifteenth century. From the time of the consummation of the schism to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the Greek Church partook of the varying fortunes of the Greek power.

When Michael Paleologus fell in the breach defending his capital, the last remnant of the once expansive empire, the Greek Church fell also; for after the separation from Rome, it became a mere national church, and as such necessarily followed

the fortunes of the nation. It had not then much to lose, as the conquering Turk had long ago planted the standard of Islam in the rich provinces that had obeyed the turbulent rule of Constantinople. The option he offered to the conquered, hateful servitude or Islam, could hardly encourage the hope that the Greek Church would long survive the loss of its temporal support. Some remnants of it were, by their anti-Christian masters, permitted to exist under galling conditions. Many of the Greeks fled to foreign lands rather than live under the intolerable rule of their new masters. Some to the Latin or southern nations, more took a north-eastern course, where hospitality of the natives revived their drooping spirits. Another political star was then approaching the horizon.

The great Russian empire had not yet attained to formation. The nucleus of the great power, however, even at that time, might be easily discerned in the conglomeration of tribes and races that formed it. Many professed the Catholic faith, introduced among them by Sts. Cyril and Methodius, about the tenth century; others favored the teaching of the Greek Church. The power itself wanted a religion to honor as a national Church.

What more ready, more compliant, than the Greek Church. Thus the Greeks, dispersed by the Mohammedans, found an asylum, and not only an asylum, but friends and protectors to themselves and their religion, in the semi-barbarous people

and their ruler in the north. They lost their main support and protector in the fall of the Greek emperor with his empire; they found another less prominent, less ostentatious, but more solid, destined in the future to develop into one of the great powers of the world.

The Greeks found plastic material in the half-civilized people to establish a national religion and to form the native character in harmony therewith. All other religions were rigidly excluded, so that the adherents to other religions who in the course of the extension of the empire were compelled to be its subjects, found themselves the objects of Greek orthodox hostility and frequent molestation.

In its hopeless condition, then, after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the Greek Church found not only a friend but a powerful protector in the slowly yet steadily increasing autocratic power of Russia.

Having thus become the national Church, its progress and vitality may be measured by the extension and duration of the empire. Beyond this, however, it possesses but few adherents excepting those in the districts of Southern Europe, suffered by their conquerors, the Turks, to exist.

Had it been the true Church of Christ, the Greeks would have long ago carried the truths of Christianity into the vast regions of Asia, densely peopled by those living for ages in the darkness of infidelity and idolatry. They have been admirably situated

for diffusing the light of Christianity to the benighted Asiatics, for they are the closest neighbors to them. But a severed branch cannot be expected to possess the vigor requisite for the bearing of fruit. Hence, when the Catholic Church, in the prosecution of her divine mission, has steadily persevered in her efforts, notwithstanding the greatest difficulties and dangers, to reach the most distant parts of Asia, and extend to its almost countless inhabitants the religious benefits of Christianity, with gratifying results, we find the Greek Church almost unknown beyond the limits of the Russian and a portion of the Turkish empires.

It is evident that the Greek Church is a mere national institution, devoid of those attributes pertaining to and distinguishing the true Church of Christ. Now its adherents are numerous and it presents an imposing appearance, being next to the Catholic Church in numerical strength.

But it is easy to understand the cause of its growth as well as to perceive that nearly all of its followers and strength lie within the limits of one country, Russia. There it flourishes by the support of the secular power. But the Church of Christ needs not to be upheld by the sword. It may still further increase, but it will do so only in proportion to the expansion of the empire within whose boundaries it holds intolerant sway. This is but a feature of all national institutions, which soon evince signs of decay as soon as the power declines

or altogether disappears from which they received their vitality.

The Church of Christ acknowledges no earthly power as the source of its maintenance or success. It may be repressed in one country for a time, but it will rise again in vigor, showing the innate vitality it possesses from the divine source from which it emanates, to spread itself over the whole earth and to remain there till the end of time for the salvation of men.

CHAPTER X.

Mohammedanism.

THE neglect of the conversion of the Asiatics to the Christian faith has been partly attributed, in a previous chapter, to the internal disorders and refractory spirit prevailing in the Greek element of the Christian fold.

Another most powerful and active cause operating towards the exclusion of Christian missionaries from Asia, together with the expulsion and perversion of the Christians who had established themselves for ages in Palestine and the neighboring countries, must be ascribed to the rise and rapid development of the religious-politic system established by Mahomet. The means employed by this self-styled prophet for the formation of his religion, and the mode he enjoined upon his followers to enforce its propagation, distinguished him as the most unique amongst the human authors of systems, religious or otherwise, that have drawn to their acceptance multitudes of adherents.

The history of Mahomet shows to what a singular position of power and influence directive to earthly

conditions of others and their eternal destiny an obscure individual is capable of attaining.

If Mahomet had any ambitious aspirations when a young man, he did not manifest them. Being inclined to the occupation of a trader of merchandise, his proclivities would appear to tend towards a quiet life rather than the din of battle accompanying a religious warrior's career. His marriage with a wealthy widow placed him in easy circumstances, affording him the leisure and means to speculate on his subsequent career of adventure and unbounded ambition. When forty years of age, he announced himself privately to a few of his friends as the prophet of God. His pretensions, however, met with such displeasure and opposition as would discourage one less determined. Mahomet was not discouraged. He gained adherents in time by perseverance, with the inspiring influence of resoluteness. Thinking himself strong enough to impose by force his rule over Mecca, his native city, and its vicinity, he attempted, in A. D. 622, to coerce into submission all who opposed him. In the conflict which followed the prophet's party was defeated, and Mahomet sought refuge in the city of Medina, where he strongly fortified himself against attack. Medina not only afforded Mahomet an asylum, but also became a prolific recruiting centre for his newly-formed army; for his promise to his followers of a life of many blessings on earth, and the certainty of endless happiness in a future state,

found ready response from the Arabs, the warlike sons of the desert. Viewing his forces, thus considerably augmented, he resolved to retrieve his lost cause at Mecca and force that city to acknowledge him as its master. In his attack upon the city he was entirely successful, the power of his adversaries being entirely broken. He found it of little or no difficulty to force all to accept his new doctrine, however reluctantly, the exercise of free will with safety of the person being disregarded. This was the beginning of the Mohammedan power. It spread with almost the rapidity of a conflagration over all Arabia.

The spirit of fanaticism infused into the followers of Mahomet by the teaching of his doctrine, made them contemn all dangers in the assurance of obtaining the rewards promised. If they were not invincible, they were at least a most determined, a most obstinate foe. Obstinacy or determination in modern warfare are of little weight, as success depends entirely on superiority of skill, of science, or of weapons, or on these combined. Not so in Mahomet's days, and for many centuries after his age. Then, little superiority in weapons could be attributed to any nation, as the sword, the shield and the spear constituted the principal armor of all nations.

But then personal bravery and determination largely contributed to the gaining of a victory, for whole battalions could not be slaughtered as in

modern warfare at long distance, but it was necessary to come to close quarters where resoluteness and skill determined the issue of an engagement.

These few remarks are made concerning warfare that it may be understood how the Mussulmans increased so rapidly and extended the tyranny of their sway so widely in a short space of time.

The patriot may stand unflinchingly where the mercenary would seek safety in flight, but even the patriot, however brave, could hardly withstand the assault of an enemy animated with fanaticism such as Mohammedanism inspires. The history of their wars and victories confirm these assertions. Few in number, like all other politic or religious bodies that have come to greatness, they eclipsed all others in the extent of their conquests and the numbers of their adherents in the first century of their existence.

After the collapse of the great Roman empire, none of the powers established on its ruins could extend its rule over the many nations that owed submission to that empire. Petty kings and princes parcelled it amongst themselves, and no one excelled every other as to be regarded preëminently superior. An army of enthusiasts like the Mohammedans, with unity of motives and purpose resulting from blind obedience to the same religious teaching, vanquished with ease the luxurious rulers of the east. They next directed their operations against the Greek power, the most formidable that they had to encounter. But the Greek emperors were little

removed from the luxury and effeminacy characteristic of the eastern ruler. They had degenerated from wielding the sceptre with justice, impartiality and firmness. They had relinquished the honorable, martial spirit for the field of polemics and religious disputations. Consequently, they could offer but feeble resistance to the invading Mussulmans. Province after province was subjugated by the victorious Mohammedans, city after city fell into their hands. Jerusalem and the adjacent places, rendered holy by the presence of the Saviour of men in his earthly life, shared the same fate. At length they swept down like a torrent on Constantinople, the capital. Only the strength of the fortifications saved the city from capture. For eight consecutive years, 670–678, the terrified citizens beheld the dreaded invaders before their walls awaiting the fall of the place. The siege was abandoned from many motives, but only to allow the disappointed besiegers to direct their operations elsewhere.

All Christendom now became alarmed at the rapid spread of the Mussulman power and religion. The Christian nations were the only ones that seriously obstructed the Mohammedan path to universal conquest. Therefore they rightly esteemed the Christians their most formidable opponents. Having renewed the attack on Constantinople under the Caliph Soliman, after a siege of thirteen months they were forced by the Emperor Leo, the Isaurian,

to retire with heavy loss. Subsequently they turned their faces towards the west, where many kingdoms and principalities had arisen in the dismemberment and final overthrow of the Roman empire. A similar tide of success bore them to victory in Southern Europe to that which marked their eastern conquests. Spain soon lay at their feet, and the march over the Pyrenees commenced. Filled with consternation, Christian Europe flew to arms. France was the first object of attack. The renowned Charles Martel and Count Eudes did not wait to be attacked, but marched against the invading host. Anxiety filled every breast as to the issue of the impending encounter.

The hostile forces met at Poitiers. There, in A. D. 632, was fought the battle that freed Europe from the fear of Mohammedan domination, stemmed the tide of conquest and forced the invaders to recross the Pyrenees into the peninsula.

These two reverses somewhat subdued Mohammedan ardor for fresh conquests. The retention, however, of the provinces already conquered with their intolerable treatment of all Christians who had the misfortune to become their subjects by the power of the sword, proved a standing menace to the Christian nations of the world.

Africa offered an easier prey to the followers of the false prophet and less formidable foes to dread. There was found more susceptible soil for the sowing of their false doctrine. And there, consequently,

the Mohammedan faith spread far and wide. There the barbarous or semi-barbarous state of the inhabitants could not be expected to oppose serious obstacles to the imposition of the Mohammedan rule and religion. Hence so many millions of Mohammedan worshippers have been found in the nations of Africa.

As a series of great victories and the extension of its rule over others tend to the increase of a nation's pride and a lessened regard for others, so it should be considered not surprising that the successful invasion of countries produced such effects on the Mohammedans.

In the reverses sustained at Poitiers and Constantinople they learned to respect the Christian warriors of the west. They treated, however, in a most galling manner the unfortunates who had fallen into their power in the east. They did so with impunity because there was no power strong enough to assail them in their strongholds of the east. They had little to fear from the impotency of the declining Greek power.

The nations of Europe may be said to have been in a state of formation at the time of Mussulman victories in the seventh and eighth centuries, so that the undertaking of a great foreign expedition could not be apprehended from any of them. Therefore, the condition of Christians in the east, under the followers of Mahomet, was both sad and miserable. Especially to those making pilgrimages from Europe

to the Holy Land was the treatment by the Mahommedans intolerable.

The love of many for their Divine Saviour filled them with the desire to view and venerate the places hallowed by His birth, His labors and cruel death. Hence numbers of pious Catholics made frequent pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The treatment which these pilgrims experienced from the Mahommedans, the masters of Jerusalem, was not of such a nature as to encourage the faithful to continue these visits.

It was always the same story these pious devotees had to tell to their neighbors when they returned alive from the former home of the Jews: Suffering both morally and bodily, indignities beyond measure, and, finally, the deprivation of the means with which they had provided themselves in order to defray the expenses of the pilgrimage. Their pitiable condition, on their return, excited the commiseration and sympathy of all who had heard of the inhuman treatment they had suffered from the unbearable custodians of the holy places.

The affecting narratives of the Christian pilgrims became the topic of public gatherings and private parties. The valor of Christian chivalry felt taunted; it required but the spirit of organization to make its prowess felt by the sensual and fanatic Mussulman, to make just retaliations for the hateful treatment of the pilgrims.

In the eleventh century, the Christian nations of Europe were aroused to indignation by the affecting descriptions of the wrongs the Christians had to endure, without redress, by earnest and vehement harangues of Peter the Hermit, who, being an eye-witness to Christian sufferings, had been authorized by Pope Urban II. to visit the Catholic countries and arouse in them sympathy for their co-religionists, and to instigate the princes and nobles to remedy the evil by the justifiable punishment of the offenders. These exhortations produced the desired effect, calling into existence expeditions known as the Crusades. No more picturesque display of military bodies is recorded than that presented by the armies called forth by the fire of eloquence to avenge the indignities and injuries inflicted for ages on the devout pilgrims who visited the historic spots of the Orient connected with their redemption. The natural religious zeal to see the Cross tower above the Crescent must have intensified the ardor and electrified the chivalrous spirit that animated the participants in these vast military expeditions, undertaken to wrench the Holy Land from Mohammedan domination.

The first and greatest of the Crusades was undertaken in 1095. Well organized and led by the most illustrious military chiefs of the age, it produced an alarming effect for the safety of his empire on the mind of the Greek emperor, Alexis Comnenus. The united army of the several nations that took part in this Crusade comprised 700,000

men. No such mighty host did Europe or Asia behold since the time Xerxes led his army of 1,000,000 against the Greeks. Though numerically strong, the Christian army was, from its international character, weak. Though united for one great object, the freedom of the Holy Land from Mussulman oppression, rivalry and national prejudices weakened the efforts of the army when the combative operations of the campaign began. The covert opposition of the Greek emperor had also to be experienced. He had earnestly solicited the intervention of the European nations, for the benefit of the downtrodden Christians of the east. But true to the national character, he manifested his fickle disposition when he beheld the Christian army in his dominion, by impeding its progress, instead of aiding it towards the successful issue of the campaign. Then sickness, disease, and privations of various descriptions, aided effectively the Mussulmans in thinning the ranks of the invading host. Yet, notwithstanding stratagems and obstacles placed in their way to deter them from their purpose, the Christian forces defeated the Mohammedans in several great battles, notably those of Nicæa and Dorylæum. These Mohammedan reverses opened up the way to Jerusalem ; the last contested, but one of the principal objects of the Christian expedition. The vast army had dwindled down to 50,000 when the Christian warriors descried the famous city.

The Mohammedan forces also experienced the ravages and diminishing effects incident to so great a campaign. They were no longer capable of combat in the open field with the victorious Crusaders. With the exception of a few strongholds, the Holy Land had been wrenched from their grasp.

The strong fortifications of Jerusalem might well inspire the hope of a long siege; but the besiegers were intent upon its capture. Without it, the Crusade could not be considered a complete success.

Christian valor was at length rewarded by the taking of the city on the 25th of July, 1099, after a siege of five weeks. This was the crowning act of the first and greatest Crusade.

With the expulsion of the Mohammedans from Palestine, the leaders of the Crusaders seemed satisfied. They returned to Europe with their forces, leaving a small body of 5,000 of cavalry and infantry under Godfrey de Bouillon, elected King of the conquered territory, for its defence.

Though the Mohammedan armies recoiled in disorder, with heavy loss from the shock received in the collision with their Christian foes, yet Mussulman power was not broken, nor the aspiration to further conquest, nay, universal dominion, apparently diminished by their loss of the Holy Land. They probably regarded their reverses as a temporary loss, to be recovered with interest in future struggles. That they had no intention of abandoning the hope of regaining their lost spoils, they made evident as

soon as they had sufficiently recuperated the strength of their shattered armies. In less than fifty years from the time of their final defeat by the first Crusade, they resumed hostilities, capturing some of the slightly protected Christian strongholds and menacing others. This necessitated the appeal for another Crusade. The Popes, as the supreme pastors of the fold of Christ, naturally felt alarm for the safety of the universal flock and the Christian possessions at the rapid advance of the terrorizing Mohammedans. Hence they became the principal instigators to the undertaking of these crusading expeditions. Their appeals, through eloquent preachers in the most warlike nations of Europe, generally received a gratifying response from the nobles, princes, and reigning monarchs. Yet, notwithstanding their valor, good discipline, and formidable equipment, all of the Crusades, except the first one, may be pronounced failures, in realizing the principal object of these expeditions. Some evil genius would seem to preside over the movements of these great armies, allowing them to go to destruction or rendering them abortive. Some, like Crassus and his Romans, perished in the desert. Others, like the 10,000 celebrated by Xenophon, accomplished long marches in many privations and dangers, till they came in sight of some large body of red-cross warriors. At the close of the twelfth, or beginning of the thirteenth century, the Saracens or Mohammedans had re-established their rule over most of Palestine.

The saintly King, Louis IX. of France, led the Crusaders in the last two expeditions to restore Christian rule in the land of the Jews. These, however, met with no better success than the preceding ones.

The chivalrous King, emboldened by success in reducing Damietta, marched against Cairo, but, in turn, was defeated, and both himself and his army taken prisoners by the Mohammedans.

Obtaining his freedom by ransom at the conclusion of peace, Louis was fired anew with noble ardor to recover the holy places, and plant the Cross above the Crescent. Having raised another well-equipped army, he embarked on his last earthly expedition. He intended first to subdue the Bey of Tunis, who, he believed, had deceived him in not furnishing aid as promised for the success of the Crusade. During the siege of the place, Louis caught the distemper that committed ravages among the troops. Knowing death to be nigh, he prepared for it with the disposition of a Christian ruler, noted for sanctity during life. He died the death of the Saint and valiant soldier; spending his last moments in the most edifying manner, not only to those who surrounded him, but also to posterity. Thus, fruitlessly, like most of the others, terminated in A. D. 1270, the eighth and last of the crusades.

Different opinions have been held regarding the necessity or utility of the Crusades. It would require very strong arguments to show that any immediate

or absolute necessity existed for such gigantic expeditions, involving great loss of life and expenditure.

That there existed Christian grievances against their oppressive Mohammedan rulers in Palestine, may be admitted without question, for where is the country under their rule, inhabited by Christians, that has not known degradation from the intolerant followers of the false Prophet. Yet, unless the Christian nations of Europe were united, and firmly determined to establish a power in the Holy Land, to hold it in perpetuity, the Crusades could hardly be productive of lasting benefit to Christianity, or those Christians whose conditions they were intended to ameliorate.

An army, under a divided command, cannot achieve such substantial and permanent results as one of equal proportions, under a single command. It is manifest that this was the principal defect with the Crusades, viz.: the want of unity in their organization and command.

With unity of leadership, concentration of troops, when judged most effective in operation, can be easily effected; whereas, with separate, independent commands, such an efficient disposition of troops can scarcely be expected, where there exists rivalry between the leaders, and even among the lesser officers and soldiers, when these are of different nationalities, as in the case of the Crusades.

That the Christian nations of Europe had no strong determination to establish a permanent, effi-

cient power in the Holy Land, may be evinced from the indifference or apathy with which nearly all of the Christian monarchs regarded the later Crusades. Such spasmodic efforts, viewed politically, could not be productive of durable beneficial results.

But, though the Crusades may not be pronounced a political success, yet they were not unproductive of international fruit. Man's best interests are not promoted by the superiority of the political system alone under which he lives, but also, and principally, by his success in trade, or profession ; in other words by success in business, with the anterior benefits of a good education and all that supplements or develops it in sound literature.

To the Crusades must be ascribed the extension of mercantile business, and also the impetus to the study of international literature, promoting the acquisition of knowledge of great utility in the various occupations of life. The nations of Europe and Asia were brought into closer relations with each other. The indigenous products of either continent found ready acceptance for those of the other, till international commerce rose to such a degree of prosperity as to be considered of national importance.

The arts and sciences were not neglected ; the close contact into which they were brought, aroused the curiosity of the inhabitants of both continents to know as much as possible of the customs, pursuits, occupations, and general character of each other. Hence the impulse to the study of foreign languages,

whereby the literary treasures of eastern nations became the cherished acquisitions of those of the west. Thus did the Crusades contribute largely to individual and national prosperity, to intellectual development, social refinement, and to the interest of civilization.

That religious, political power sprung from Mecca has, like other merely human institutions, experienced the vicissitudes of fortune attending human productions. It shot forth like a tropical plant; with the sword as its decisive argument for extending itself and indulging the sensual propensities of its subjects, it attained to a dazzling altitude in a brief space of time. In its ascent, it included in the shade of its expanding branches no inconsiderable portion of the fairest regions of the earth. In less than a hundred years from its birth, it may be said to have reached its greatest limits.

In the first half of the eighth century, the followers of Mahomet had conquered Arabia, Persia, Asia-Minor, Egypt, and other places in North Africa. They struck terror into the subjects of the Greek empire; overran its provinces, and threatened the capture of its capital, Constantinople, in repeated sieges of the city. They startled all Europe by their sudden appearance and victories in Spain. They rushed like a torrent over the Pyrenees, down into the valleys of France. There their course was reversed. At Poitiers, by the powerful blows of

Charles Martel, the Moslem host was stunned and forced to retrace its steps to the Peninsula.

This defeat together with that experienced by another powerful Mohammedan army near Constantinople, relieved the Christian world from the greatest menace of Mohammedan aggression. Their capture of Constantinople in 1453, might appear to some to mark the time of their greatest power. Yet, their power for successful invasion after that event was more apparent than real. They subsequently made some attempts to revive their former reputation as conquerors of new countries, to be added to their dominion, but were forced to relinquish the enterprise by superior Christian valor.

In the nineteenth century the Mussulman power has rapidly declined. It has been weakened internally by division, externally by loss of many of its best possessions. At one time in its history, it vied with Christianity in extending its sway over the minds and bodies of men. Now, near the close of the nineteenth century, it is out of the race for supremacy. The Sultan of Constantinople, regarded as the most powerful of Mussulman rulers, is now known as the sick man of Europe. The political doctors have repeatedly been called in to prescribe for him. At every visit his case is pronounced more hopeless. His once vast dominion is fast dwindling into remnants. It is well known that he exists by Christian sufferance, or the disagreement of Christian rulers.

Events point to the speedy disappearance of the Crescent from Europe, and even in Asia and Africa, to the rapid decline of whatever is left of the once dreaded religious-political, but demoralizing power, that in more than one period of its existence threatened the existence of Christendom.

CHAPTER XI.

The Church a Pacificator.

THE angelic hymn of praise to God and peace and joy to men, announcing the birth at Bethlehem of the Saviour of men, fittingly inaugurated His peace-promoting earthly life, as well as the pacific course of His Church which He founded for the gathering into one fold of the nations of the earth. Christ is justly described in Scripture as the Prince of Peace. It was with the salutation of peace that He was wont to address His disciples: "Peace be to you."

Peace is desirable to all good men, and consequently the good of every nation labor and rejoice to possess it. In general, the prosperity and happiness of a nation may be measured by the degree of peace to which it has attained under its political and spiritual guides. Even the ambitious, pursuing the objective realization of the mental ideals, the lovers of the din of battle, will feel satiated when the novelty of gilded yet ghastly scenes has passed away, when the nerves become impaired, the spirit depressed and the senses glutted to satiety with

the carnage of war, attended with the desolation accompanying the devastator's tread.

The welfare of the individual, as well as that of the nation, demands the possession of peace. Without it all other possessions, all other acquisitions would be found unenjoyable. The violation of the Divine law or the justly enacted human law under which one lives and, with regard to nations, the failure to comply with the requirements of international law, cause respectively agitation to the mind and commotion to the mass of the people. But, although it be easy to offend, and thus bring on the undesirable condition banishing peace, it has been generally found an irksome and humiliating duty to return to a satisfactory course of tranquility. The delay in the return to man's peaceful condition, when lost, renders life not only unpleasant but even burdensome in the highest degree. Christ came on earth to give peace with God, with one's self and with one's neighbor. He emphasized the possession of true peace when He said to His disciples: "Peace I leave you, peace I give you," etc. He, therefore, impressed upon His Church this character of true peace. If any other passage of Sacred Scripture be adduced as contradicting this peace-giving character of Christ, as when He says "I came not to send peace, but the sword," its meaning is to be applied to particular cases, as when a person, by his conversion to Christianity against the wishes of his near relatives, incurs their hostility and persecution.

When the Apostles went forth to preach the Gospel, and convert the nations to Christianity, they astonished their enemies, whom determined, fearless preaching of the doctrines of Christ had stirred up to persecution. With imperturbable mind they received the punishment that was meted out to them as offenders against the laws prescribing worship of the pagan gods. Far from being terrified, far from losing mental tranquility at the sight of tortures to be endured, they even rejoiced when they had anything to suffer for the name of Jesus. The Christian martyrs also, of both sexes, in the most trying circumstances, experienced such inward peace as often to exasperate the cruel Roman judge. The imposing display of military or civil power, of forensic subtlety, of the alternate threats and bland promises of the pagan judge, could not disturb the serenity of these true heroes. The true doctrine of Christ, besides imparting peace to the individual, conveys it also to the people or the nation collectively. Of the former, what has been already said may be deemed sufficient. Peace, collectively or to the nation, requires a fuller consideration to show its influences and beneficial results. As Christ is the great spiritual pacificator, His universal commission to His disciples in sending them, immediately before His ascension into heaven, to teach all nations, necessarily included the peace-producing fruit of His doctrine to the believers. As these increased in numbers in many nations, they diffused the

beneficial influence of their pacific character among the mass of the people. Yet the ruling power of the nations was either pagan or idolatrous. It dreaded the potency of the Christian religion, whose avowed object was the absorption of the members of all other religions by their conversion from false to the true religion. The alarm of many at the institution of Christianity among them, instigated them to unite their efforts for its final overthrow. In this endeavor they were most powerfully aided by the secular or political rulers, who regarded themselves as the avengers of neglect of the gods, and defenders of the pagan worship. Hence ensued the bitter struggles between the pagan emperors of the great Roman empire and the Christian Church. No national peace could be experienced in that disturbed condition of society.

But when Christianity triumphed in the struggle and Paganism was hopelessly supplanted by the victor, a new era of peace and charity dawned upon the nations. The rulers, who had imbibed Christianity, would necessarily be constrained to curb the propensity to unwarranted violation of international peace, or invasion of another's dominions, through the greed of territorial acquisition, or personal aggrandizement, knowing they must be judged by a just and omnipotent Judge, who would avenge with punishment, transcending all earthly punishment, the wrongs unjustly inflicted by the powerful upon the weak.

There have, however, been Christian rulers, whose wars undertaken for trivial reasons, would seem to indicate a want of that salutary dread aroused by the belief of having to render a strict account to the Judge of all men. Such deserve the just reprobation of the good; they will never be honored as models tendered to succeeding rulers for imitation, and they will never receive that tribute of honor so desirable to all, the praise of posterity.

In the fourth century, the triumph of Christianity over Paganism was assured; in the fifth, the mighty fabric of the Roman empire, long manifesting symtoms of decay, crumbled into pieces. This event created new conditions, political, social, and religious. Roman civilization had affected but lightly, if at all, some of the distant portions of the empire. Out of these, especially in the north and east, hordes of barbarians rushed like a torrent, sweeping all before them; spreading terror among the defenceless inhabitants, not desisting from their hostile course, till they reveled in the luxuries of Italy. They smote with fear the inhabitants of the nation that had made her sons rulers of the world.

In this state, approaching chaos, what power was there to intervene for the benefit of humanity; to restore order to the disturbed nations, suffering from the general confusion that prevailed? What power existed strong enough to subdue the fierce invaders, whose furious assaults, the well-trained Roman felt and dreaded in many a field of battle?

Who, above all, should be the Saviour of society, threatened with demoralization, by the domination of the barbarian over what was civilized in the empire? There was no other pacificator for the general politically and socially disturbed condition, than the Church of Christ. To its head the terrified people looked for protection.

The Popes responded with paternal care. Twice did they cause the terrible hosts of Huns and Goths, thirsting for the blood and plunder of Roman citizens, to retire from the walls of Rome. These barbarians, whom Roman superior military skill, as well as attempts to civilize, failed to subdue, gradually yielded to the conquering influences of Christianity. By its harmonizing effects, they soon assimilated with the people among whom they settled by force of arms. From this intermixture there sprang new nations, new powers; some of which continued for ages, others still more durable and consolidated, continue with little change or modification to the present day.

The task of the Church, after barbarian rule succeeded that of the civilized Roman, was to harmonize it for the benefit of nations, and make it in time harmonize with the teachings of the Gospel. How successful she has labored towards this end, history attests. Though a people or a monarch may accept the true faith, there may remain in the one, or the other, or both, propensities to what is contrary to the spirit of their faith, and yet require time and prudence in treatment, before they can be eradicated

from the character, or so weakened as to be harmless in causing evil.

If the new powers and nations, that were formed after the dissolution of the Roman empire, acknowledged the Spiritual sway of the Church, they still retained many of their superstitions, their barbaric customs, with the innate tendency of making incursions on others, instigated by uncurbed passions rather than counselled by sound reason.

With the appearance of the feudal system, its growth and wide extension, this warring tendency found abundant nutriment to strengthen and impel it to bloody strife among the chiefs, petty princes, and monarchs, who by the sword parcelled among themselves the civilized countries of the earth. To stay this internecine strife, the Church applied herself with the sorrow that afflicts the maternal heart in in seeing her offspring engage in dreadful conflict, and with the determination to spare no effort to restore peace to the unnatural enemies.

Sometimes it happens that even a mother's grief, with affecting supplications, proves ineffectual to allay the fierce passions that urge to deeds of blood. The Church also, notwithstanding her solicitude and anxiety for the peace and welfare of her children, had often to endure the pain of seeing her intervention unproductive of the fruit of reconciliation without the decision of the sword. Generally, however, most gratifying results attended her efforts to promote the interests of peace among the nations,

and if not harmony at least honorable respect among the ambitious members of the ruling element. The truce of God, which she introduced for the sake of humanity, proves her ardent desire, fructified her strenuous labors for the desuetude of martial strife, and for the perennial reign of peace and harmony among the peoples of her fold.

The peaceful effects of the truce of God can hardly be over-estimated. It was accepted as a principle obligatory to all rulers in Christendom, to desist from all warfare from Wednesday each week to the following Monday. It thus acted as an intermittent, a statutory truce, to the belligerent parties. Who cannot perceive that its effects must be to cool the passions, afford time for reflection, and constrain them by its moral effects from a continuation of hostilities? It would be difficult to ordain a more practically effective means for the abolition of war, as also all lesser strifes decided by the force of arms.

To attain to a state of perfect peace on earth is more than the dissimilar dispositions of men, and their varying circumstances, will permit. The nearest approach to it is to confine the possibility of acts of violence within a small portion of time, with the threat of the gravest penalties to be incurred by the violation of the restrictive law. This peace-promoting remedy the Church successfully appointed; for which humanity, together with civilization, owes her a debt of gratitude.

The Church has always pursued a pacific policy towards the nations when her own existence or the safety of her flock is not menaced; but when this takes place, then defence becomes a right, a duty. Such a condition existed in the time of the Crusades, also in the subsequent aggressive expeditions of the Mohammedans against the Christians.

The secession from the Church, in the sixteenth century, of a portion of her flock has considerably lessened the beneficial influence of this pacific course by the effects emanating therefrom modifying the relations of Church and state, or entirely separating them.

The writer, here, neither defends nor condemns the union of Church and state; he states a fact. The baneful effects on the maintenance of peace among Christian rulers, of the religious separation referred to, by the withdrawing from participation in the benefits of the pacific policy of the Church, may be clearly perceived in the appalling loss of life that occurred in the many wars that have arisen out of disputes caused among Christian people within the period from the secession to the present time, a space of between 300 and 400 years. Excepting the wars of Christians and non-Christians, the Christian blood that sprinkled the battle-field in all the wars from the fall of the Roman empire in the fifth century to the sixteenth, dwindles into insignificance when compared with the torrents that drenched the battle grounds of opposing Christian

armies since Luther established a separate Church. This unnecessary sacrifice of human life, with its consequent heavy burden of taxes on the industrious and peace-loving inhabitants, and especially the tendency of a class of society to bring all others by violence down to their own level, who ignore all law, set all authority at defiance, threatening the very fabric of sound moral society, have induced the wiser, far-seeing statesmen to eagerly desire to see again the pacific intervention of the Church for the best interest of all classes of Christians. This of itself may be taken as an indication of that much-desired reunion of all separated bodies of Christians, that as of old there may be but one fold extending itself on all sides till it takes in all the nations of the earth for the Good Shepherd.

CHAPTER XII.

The Church an Educator.

THE desire of knowledge is innate to man. Nor does it suffer abatement with increase in age, as long as sound health is enjoyed, but would seem rather to become intensified with maturity of years. Hence the mental activity of some whose old age and appearance of debility might cause one to judge terrestrial existence might have no charm for them, nor the world in which they live any secret worthy of their application to know.

Without adverting to any particular branch of education or knowledge, the avidity with which all classes in all ages, ancient and modern, have sought after news, sufficiently confirms this assertion. It finds, moreover, its illustration in the almost continual perusal in modern times of the daily newspapers and periodicals. The vast discoveries that have been made from age to age; the many wonderful inventions, products of the human mind, that have changed the appliances in industries with a great diminution of labor; the metamorphosis of things thought immutable resulting therefrom, whilst contributing to satisfy the wants of the

human race in its ever-increasing numbers, developing the resources to which they have recourse: these act as a stimulant to further pursuit in the regions of the unknown to increase the general store of knowledge.

To the formation of communities we must look for the origin of education as a system. The wants of the citizens had to be attended to. These gave rise to trades and professions, which in turn demanded the employment of competent teachers and instructors, so that the theoretical knowledge of arts and professions might precede, and prepare those to be afterwards practically engaged in them.

Patriotic politicians had little difficulty to perceive that the various classes of a nation owed the amelioration of their condition, their wealth and prosperity in great part to their proficiency in their various industries and professions by means of a good education. They also perceived that what might be predicated of it with reference to the individual might, in a more extensive sense, be applied regarding a whole nation. To the great attention given to the general education of their citizens or subjects may be principally attributed the great superiority, both in commerce and military affairs, of the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans over other nations. Yet education in general depended for its teaching and advancement, not on the mandate of a nation's ruler or the executive power, but owed its encouragement and dis-

semination to individual patronage or the combined efforts of some of the members of a community, who interested themselves in the education of a portion or the whole of the citizens.

That this means of conferring the benefits of education, viz., individual patronage and support as well as denominational or sectarian efforts for the benefit of those professing a particular formula of faith, has prevailed from the time of the origin of systematic education, is a sufficient proof of its efficiency and acceptability to the general mass of mankind. In this free and generous manner of educating the mind and developing its powers, productive of such glorious mental fruits as the history of illustrious individuals attests, coercion was naturally unthought of, if not suggested, and then by the mass detested as savoring of despotism, whether emanating from the individual ruler, or the collective body in a republic or democracy. In this multiform system of education, the advantages of it were made evident, the opportunities abundant. It was left to the parent to obtain or neglect its benefits for his offspring. Herein, in the judgment of many, lay its defects. Not all parents perform their relative duties toward their offspring; and not the least flagrant violation of parental duty has been the indifference to, or the neglect of the education of his child. Consequently, illiteracy prevailed in a nation according to the extent of the parental neglect.

In the rivalry of nations, which rivalry indeed may be said to have existed in ancient, as well as in modern times, but more undisguisibly noticeable in the latter half of the nineteenth century, such a condition of things could not escape political attention in Christian nations, which, though believing in one God and the same Saviour of mankind, yet differ considerably in their forms of belief.

Then was inaugurated a new, national, political system of education, whose principal object is the elevation of the nation by means of educating the individual. In this system the freedom of the individual in matters of education is denied, whether the government be monarchic or republican; coercion is the means employed to make all reach a certain standard of knowledge. How far this system may be successful it would be unsafe to assert, as it is at the time of writing this work still in its infancy.

As the matter of education not only affects the parents, but also the Church or religion to which the child belongs, it may be conceived how difficult the subject of education is to settle in a manner satisfactory to parent, Church and state.

Many causes operate to retard the acquisition or deprive the individual of a good education. Chief among these are the designs of despotism, directing all things to the benefit of one or the favored few, and the ascendency of a bigoted religious majority over a minority in a state where different forms of religion have their respective adherents.

The culpable neglect of parents in not affording the opportunities and the means of a good education to their children justly deserves the strongest censure.

One of the gravest of the most deplorable causes injuriously affecting education in a nation, as it does industry and the general welfare of a people, is the terrible scourge of devastating war. But if many nations be involved in some violent far-reaching commotions the extent of the baneful effects can hardly be estimated.

Such political conditions existed at the subversion of the Roman empire near the close of the fifth century and continued long afterwards. The collapse of the greatest political structure that the world has ever seen could not fail to make itself sensibly felt even in the remotest parts, to the furthest bounds of civilization. Apart from her antagonism to Christianity, Pagan Rome exercised an effective, civilizing influence on all the nations brought under her sway and all those which for mutual benefits enjoyed her alliance.

In her vast scheme for giving durability to her conquests, as well as preparing tribes and peoples for absorption into the empire, she relied on education as one of her principal resources. The manners and customs of the Romans were soon adopted by the people in whose country the Roman standard had been planted.

The necessity to understand each other in the intercourse of life, after the decision of the sword,

led to the introduction of the Latin language, which thus became most widely known and spoken by many nations in conjunction with their own. The Gauls, the Britons, the Spaniards and other nations sent their children to the schools to learn the Latin language. Especially the noble youth of each of these countries completed their transformation into Roman subjects by a thorough study of the Roman language and literature. How successfully the Romans established their language in other nations may be understood from the vast number of words in the present languages of the three named nations bearing affinity to the Latin. Rome's vastly superior military power, her tranquilizing, civilizing efforts by means of education, changed, in course of time, these once fierce enemies into subsequently loyal, confiding subjects. To her they looked for protection in all national dangers, to her was confided their instruction and guidance in both civil and political matters.

When the crash of the fall of the empire came, its disastrous effects manifested themselves in many nations, producing fear and anxiety where tranquility and assurance of peace had reigned, confusion and chaos where respected order had flourished. The uprisings of the lawless and the arbitrary impositions of the ambitious, exacted by force of arms, sent a thrill of woes from one end of the fallen empire to the other. By the dissolution of the empire education suffered most severely.

In states where the strong arm of power and order had disappeared, ambitious aspirants to regal or quasi-regal honors claimed a share of the coveted provinces, enforced their pretentions by physical force, consequently strifes and petty wars were of frequent occurrence between rival claimants for power, drawing after them followers favoring their cause to the detriment of industry and peaceful pursuits.

In such a disturbed state of society, education is neglected, the bearing of arms dazzling the youth more than application to study in order to enrich the mind. The frequent call to arms of the chief or military leaders upon their retainers necessarily altered the domestic relations, and the youth had to take the place of the older members of a family in attending the farm or the paternal home. Civilization experienced a repulse; education, its most beneficial friend and companion, being neglected in the national tumults, only surpassed by the devastation of invasions, undertaken from the motive of territorial greed.

What power, what organization was there to restore order to a condition of things bordering on anarchy? Fortunately, for the benefit of mankind, for the cause of education, for the cause of civilization, there was a power to step in as a general pacificator—not with the sword, indeed, but with a weapon still more effective, the power to quell the raging passions of warring men, and lead them back to the enjoyments of the coveted state of peace,

to enlightenment of the mind by education, and to the interrupted work of civilization. This was the Church of Christ. The conversion of the barbarians who inundated the provinces of the empire, when it no longer rested under the imperial sword, was the primary object of the Church.

Italy appears to have been the principal object of attack to the military hordes that spread in successive waves over her fertile plains, and flowed in revelry through her luscious vineyards. Rome dreaded the approaching enemy in the far reaching lines of fiery Huns at the Mincio, under fierce Attila; and afterwards beheld the devouring Vandals under Genseric roll up in menacing array to her gates, as it had in a previous age viewed with discomfiture the defiant, taunting display of Hannibal's dusky host, flushed with their great victory at Cannæ over the Romans. As in the latter occasion she was saved by her walls, so in the former she was preserved from capture and plunder by the intervention of supernatural power, as history records, through the medium of Pope Leo I, whose mediation had more effect in dissuading the barbarian hosts from their hostile purpose than the presence of a great Roman army could produce. The Pope was only partially successful in appeasing Genseric, who entered the city and imposed on its inhabitants some of the penalties of the conquered. Many of the invading hosts that have from time to time entered Italy and fertile tracts adjacent to it, found the temptation to make their abode in the

invaded districts too strong to overcome, and retire to the less fertile lands from which they came. To the conversion of these, the Church most ardently applied herself with gratifying success. The subduing influence of Christianity was in course of time felt by those far off as well as those near the centre of Christendom. Peace then began to assert itself over the nations. With peace came the desire to many to apply themselves to the study of arts and sciences. The Church found powerful allies for spreading the benefits of general education in the persons of some of her royal children. Charlemagne in France, and Alfred in England, may be honored as two of the earliest sovereigns, who, with paternal sentiments, exerted themselves for the promotion of general education among their subjects. By these sovereigns, in conjunction with the bishops and clergy, schools were established throughout their realms.

These gave students to the higher schools and monasteries: some of the latter attained to high celebrity on account of the distinguished professors who from time to time filled the chairs of the different subjects taught at these institutions of learning. Many of them existed from an early age and preserved the lamp of learning in the general darkness prevailing in the times of domestic trouble and international strife, which were not unfrequent till the establishment of a durable power in the various countries of Christendom.

The institutions of education in Ireland seem to have been the best patronized of all European establishments from the sixth to the ninth or tenth century. The celebrated schools or monasteries had on the roll students in number, including many from Britain and also from the continent of Europe. Subsequently seats of learning were established both in England and on the continent.

The higher education soon began to be denominated the scholastic, from the method or system practised therein.

Among the scholastics were some of great erudition, as Anselm, Lanfranc, Duns Scotus, Abelard, St. Thomas Aquinas, etc. These distinguished men were also devout members of the church which through them and others fostered the promotion of education for the benefit of all. These were succeeded by the famous universities, many of which still exist, and, in a most flourishing condition, open annually their venerable classic halls as of yore to thousands of eager aspirants to the highest mental attainments. The national universities in Europe bear irrefutable testimony to the desire of the Church and her zeal for the enlightenment of the mind by study in the various branches of higher education, for intellectual development and for the pursuit of further knowledge in these branches.

The value of these famous educational establishments for imparting to the fortunate youth of the nations the benefits of the highest education, may

be estimated from the national pride manifested in the care bestowed upon their preservation, with the well-deserved patronage of the highest classes in sending the youth there to complete their education before entering on the particular occupations of their lives. Yet, since the defection from her fold in the sixteenth century, not infrequently has the imputation been made—proceeding from prejudice, of course—that the Church is opposed to the intellectual improvement of her subjects, and wishes to keep them in mental darkness.

The existence of the universities affords, perhaps, the best, an historical, monumental testimony for the refutation of such false allegations.

The Church, however, being the depository of truth, the guardian of those committed to her, has a right as well as a duty to perform : to disprove, to condemn the matter of education when she perceives the probability that it would be dangerous to the faith of her subjects. But, if the case of an educational system dangerous to the faith or morals of her children be excepted, it may be said with truth that the Church is a most ardent encourager of sound education. The invention of printing has greatly contributed to the facilities for education by simplifying its teaching by the teachers, and facilitating the acquisition of knowledge by the scholar. The Church's great labors in the cause of education had preceded that event. In recent times the labor has become so light, the means so simple, that she has

been considerably relieved of the burden to provide a fruitful education for the benefit of man in his temporal and spiritual affairs. She laid the foundation of the educational systems, she fostered their growth, she continued her maternal care till they attained completion; so now she may view their conduct by others with approval, as long as they do not lapse into a form hostile to the faith and morals of those whom she has regenerated for the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

Religious Agitation.—Things Leading to the Great Secession of the Sixteenth Century.

THE Church which Christ established for the salvation of man has sustained assaults from the century in which it had its origin. From the Cerinthian heresy in the first century to the slight defection in the nineteenth century, consequent to the declaration of Papal infallibility, nearly every intervening century has contributed its share to the heterogeneous mass of schisms and heresies that have attacked the unity or integrity of Christianity in some of its dogmas. While all have given trouble and sorrow, only a few have caused it serious injury. The first dangerous assault was the Arian heresy in the fourth century, to which reference was made with a brief consideration in a previous chapter. Assailing but one principle of the faith, the divinity of Christ, with the skilful arguments of a mind endowed with superior powers, it penetrated to the core of Christianity, captivating by its speciousness, a considerable portion of the bishops, the ruling class in the Church.

When, in addition, it received the active support at intervals of intrusive, imperial rulers, it may be said to have shook almost to its foundation the Church of Christ. Yet it passed away, and the Church flourished.

Then came the Greek schism, the second great religious storm, in the eleventh century, tearing away from the fold a portion of the faithful, to practise a form of worship only slightly different from that of the main body. It still maintains a separate existence, but, with the exception of the Russian Church, a national institution of indigenous growth, yet observing the rite of the Greek Church, its numbers and sway are very limited, with no prospect now, if ever it had any, of becoming the universal church of Christendom. The third and last serious injury received by the Church had its origin in the violent commotions leading to the great secessions from her fold in the sixteenth century, erroneously called the Reformation.

Though all the great schisms and heresies may ultimately be traced to one principal cause which will be considered in a succeeding chapter of this work, there are powerful auxiliary causes that deserve the historian's attention in investigating the origin of any great occurrence or event. These were not absent in the forces productive of the religious storms culminating in disruption in the sixteenth century.

First of these may be deemed kingly power. The steady growth of royal power during the two preceding centuries attained its summit in Spain and England in the sixteenth century, in France in the seventeenth. For many centuries the occupants of the thrones in the great nations of Europe enjoyed a more nominal than real power over the great nobles of their realms. The Duke of Burgundy was almost as powerful as King Louis II., and a combination of the English nobles forced King John of England to sign Magna Charta, the basis of English liberty, but defining and restraining the royal authority. Yet royal power persevered in weakening that of the aristocracy till the latter judged it imprudent and unsafe to oppose, at least physically, the royal authority. As the tendency of an aristocratic form of government is to a kingly one, in which it generally results, so it may be said with equal truth that a monarchy yields to encroachments of the people, and finally disappears in the establishment of a democracy or a republic. As civilization advances, the power of the people becomes the more manifest, and few, if any, will be found to thwart their will in matters of government. But in the sixteenth century the authority of the king prevailed over all other; he was not merely nominally, as in former centuries, but really supreme. This condition had its effect upon all his subjects, moral, political and religious. In previous ages, where feudalism prevailed, great questions often

arose involving disputes between the king and his subjects, recourse was generally had to the influence and paternal authority of the father of the faithful, the successor of St. Peter. The exercise of this authority, when appealed to, was beneficently felt when the Pope intervened between the hostile forces in the nations where complications had arisen. It acted as a curb upon the arbitrary designs of the unscrupulous ruler who was forced to yield to its influence. With the increase of kingly power, however, papal influence became weakened; the exercise of its power being seldom admitted, if not wholly rejected, in great national questions. Jealousy of intervention from an external source in the ecclesiastical affairs of a nation, as well as in those of a political nature, grew apace with regal power. By this power the bond uniting Christian nations was broken. It enabled the ruler who assumed a hostile attitude to the Pope to disregard the paternal voice of the father of Christendom.

By it he could intrude upon the nation subject to him whatever peculiar form of worship was pleasing to the royal mind. By it Henry VIII. of England could proscribe Catholicity, that had been the faith of the nation for nearly a thousand years, and introduce a mongrel form which has been undergoing a course of transformation, at least in practice, from its inception to the present time. A similar course was pursued by the kings of Northern Europe and the quasi-regal rulers of the states of Germany, who

had embraced new doctrines. The mandate of the ruler sufficed to coerce the terrorised subject to adopt and profess the religious principles pleasing to his royal master. There could be no sincere conversion of the subject in such a condition. Life and possessions are dear to man and much will be endured rather than experience their loss. But time proves the foundation and durability of institutions. What subject to-day, in any of these nations, would heed the mandate of its ruler affecting his religious convictions? How time changes the conditions and relations of men!

The leaders of the sects, formed by those severed from the Church in the sixteenth century, soon perceived where the motive-power of a nation lay. Thither they directed their most strenuous efforts; no argument being needed to convince them that if the head of a nation was gained to their peculiar doctrine, the conquest of the rest would be of easy accomplishment. Hence the rulers of European nations were importunately besieged by the religious innovators. These were ever ready to subserve the royal caprice, provided they retained his favor and approbation for the propagation of the principles of their sect. Thus did Cranmer and his associates bow obsequiously to the will of Henry VIII.; Luther and his co-laborers to that of Philip of Hesse, in countenancing the bigamous actions of these rulers; Calvin attempted to win the heart of the King of France to his doctrine, but completely

failed. His followers, however, the Huguenots, gained a temporary success in that nation, where, with unusual boldness, intrigue and violence, they threatened for a time the existence of the national faith. In a brief period, where only one religion had hitherto been practised, there prevailed many. As in its political life, so also in its religious, each nation became distinct from all others. Each had its peculiar form of worship, fostered and supported by the state. Autocracy, or domineering over the minds of men to shape their religious belief, may continue for a time, but a re-action with the force of a gathering storm will at length come; it has long since appeared to the rulers of these nations. The advance of civilization made the power of the people felt. Nothing short of representative government will satisfy their aspirations or be ratified by their will. Hence the progressive disintegration of those national churches that drew their resources from the power of the state. They had been but apathetically attended by the masses from their beginning, an evident consequence of the motives that led the great majority of the people to join them. Their hollowness in later times has been apparent to all, having fallen from the main Christian edifice, the material for cohesion was not to be found in them.

The human mind knows its responsibility to God alone for its religious course, and, though it may act hypocritically under coercion, it will revolt

when the opportunity presents itself, with disaster to those who brought it into bondage. This is what is taking place at the present time in the national churches which were forced upon the people in the sixteenth century. How many of the people are active members of these churches? The statistics of the churches show that they are few in comparison with the whole population. The people are gradually freeing themselves from the errors in which they had been involved. They can read and understand the history of the Christian religion. This informs them that Christ established only one Church, and that it would continue to the end of the world. Naturally, they desire to belong to that Church, to secure themselves from the wrath to come upon all who knowingly refuse to enter the great Christian fold. Hence, they are finding their way, all classes, into the Church from which their forefathers had been driven by moral and physical force. Not the least significant sign of the magnitude of this religious movement is the ever-increasing number of ministers of the different persuasions who find peace for their souls in the Catholic Church.

Another of the causes deserves notice. The accidental invention of printing, though a valuable one for the promotion of education and learning, must be accredited with its share in fulminating the massing religious clouds that burst with unmanageable fury over Christian nations in the sixteenth century.

The acquisition of knowledge by learning at school or elsewhere was necessarily impeded by slow process when nearly all aids to it had to be supplied by the hand or tongue. As all works were in manuscript, the cost of a person's education amounted to no inconsiderable sum, so that those of the middle class of society, not blessed with abundance of the goods of the world, had to practise frugality and economy to give their children the means for a fair education.

The cheapness of printed work, the facilities afforded by it both to the teacher and the scholar, and the impetus given by it to the diffusion of knowledge, should claim for this invention the right to be esteemed as one of the greatest aids to enlightenment of the mind and the rapid progress of civilization.

By means of the press, though still in its infancy in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the authors of new opinions in religious matters were enabled to spread far and wide their doctrine in much less time than formerly and at a fraction of the cost required in the former condition of things. Especially was the new invention utilized in multiplying copies of the Scriptures, for it was on the dissemination of these that those dissatisfied with the Church sought to revolutionize it, as if it had been a merely human institution.

It must have inflated the mind of the comparatively ignorant peasant, who had scarcely mastered

the elements of education, reading and writing, to have been pressed to receive a copy of the Bible so that he might read himself the word of God and judge for himself its meaning, and not altogether depend upon hearing it read by another with the Church's interpretation accompanying. The new apostles had yet to discover by experience how wonderful a book the Bible is, leading to different opinions concerning its contents when left to private interpretation. But its extensive distribution at that time served a purpose.

The imputation against the Church by the religious agitators, that she wished to keep her subjects in darkness concerning the Scriptures, appeared to be emphasized by a general distribution of these among all those whose minds were wavering or already susceptible to new doctrine.

Those who have received no education, and those who have received but little education, afford to those preaching a new gospel most suitable material for converting them into fanatics. Thus it happened in the religious commotions of the sixteenth century. Printing afforded its aid in the religious movements by increasing the facilities for spreading new opinions and the means for concerted action among the leaders of the agitation for separation from the Church; it sent the Bible broadcast, as the great charm for drawing recruits to the new colors. More will be found written of the Bible in a subse-

quent chapter, regarding its place in relation to the work of man's salvation.

The last of the secondary causes to be considered, affecting the religious commotions, was the fall of the Greek Empire, the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. That event caused a thrill throughout Europe.

By it the Mussulman was enabled to renew his menace against the Christian nations. Many of the fugitive Greeks sought and found asylums in Christian countries, rather than accept the servile conditions of the unchristian conqueror.

Although the Greeks could do little for or against either of the parties in the impending struggle, as their religious tenets harmonized with those of neither, yet their presence was felt; for their tenacity in maintaining their peculiar opinions, contrary to the decree of the Catholic Church, regarding matters of faith common to both Greek and the separatists of the sixteenth century, may well be conceived to have exerted its influence, rendering those also tenacious who, tired of her rule, determined to formulate for themselves a new faith, contrary to the teachings of the same Church.

Whilst these refugees, therefore, contributed in no little degree to the revival of the Greek language and literature throughout Europe, they cannot be credited with any pacific influence on the disturbed state of religious feeling in nations professing Catho-

licity at the close of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century.

These enumerated causes have been mentioned, not as the primary cause or great source from which the lamentable religious revolution sprang, but as feeding and extending the appalling conflagration when the torch had been applied.

The human mind had been profoundly agitated by the able and skillful presentment of new religious principles intended to supplant those it had unwaveringly held as inseparable from the hope of eternal happiness: the heart, the passions were inflamed to that degree when tension can no longer bear the strain. The germs of discontent, commotion and separation had been in process of fermentation even before the end of the fifteenth century, but it was in the beginning of the sixteenth when they assumed the form of a seething mass. It required but a dexterous hand to give it shapely form and set it up as a rival church to that which had come down from the Christian era. This directive power it found in the person of Martin Luther, an Augustinian Monk of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XIV.

Martin Luther.

THERE were many leaders in the great secessions from the Catholic Church, which took place at different times in the sixteenth century. As in every great crisis some individual eclipses in celebrity all others, so no other draws so much attention in the religious events of that century as did Martin Luther. He may be termed the prime-mover in the agitations that culminated in the defection from the Church of several of the northern nations of her fold. Hence he is accorded in history that prominence which he enjoyed in life.

In his early life, he gave no indication of his future celebrity. His mental powers, though not extraordinary, were good, whilst his diligent application to study with his proficiency in dialectics made him no mean antagonist. But what he possessed came to him through laborious study, not by intuition. Luther had not yet chosen a profession for his career, when by an accident he was impelled to seek the benefits of a religious life, to secure himself spiritually against the many accidents and dangers to which life in the world is exposed.

The sudden death of a companion by his side, by lightning, was the cause of his prompt determination. He joined the Augustinian Order of Monks, at that time one of the most distinguished societies of religious in the Church. There Luther had increased facilities afforded him for the development of his mental faculties, and the enlargement of his store of knowledge. Luther renounced the world, with its concupiscences and those of the flesh, when he made the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Some years later, in time of temptation, he failed to fulfil the obligations he had thus taken upon himself. In temperament he was impetuous, irascible and combative, so that it may be supposed that his monastic life was not of the smoothest tenor. Raised to the priesthood, he might well be expected by his superiors to be an ornament to his order.

In appreciation of his ability he was appointed Lecturer on dialectics and theology in the University of Wittenberg. Here he more than satisfied the trust reposed in him, for he regarded no bounds appointed him, only limiting himself with what self-satisfaction required. Flavoring his lectures with sturdy eloquence, he drew no inconsiderable audiences from admiring students. In short, he gained a reputation for learning, ability and eloquence; but, further, he struck the chord of national sentiment, and rose on the tide of popular esteem.

Luther was born in a time of religious disquietude. The strange opinions and teachings of Wycliffe in England, and of Huss on the continent, had but slightly preceded his own day. They may have acted on Luther as an incentive to investigate the reasons for the existing form of Christian belief.

The activity of those who at intervals appear to disturb the peace and endanger the welfare of Christ's Church, should be deplored and counteracted by all just, legal and human means, but no one has authority to punish them with death. Hence, the burning of Huss, if done for his religious opinions or teachings, was an assumption of power detestable to all just men and to all lovers of humanity; for to whom has God given the right to punish with death his fellow-creature because of a difference in belief?

The Lord has reserved to Himself the right to punish all who knowingly and wilfully recede from true belief. A Christian should not be less opposed to capital punishment for errors in faith than was the greatest of the Romans, in the case of Catiline, for conspiring against the republic and attempting the destruction of Rome. There is a condition of the human mind, the natural and ordinary one, of giving willing obedience to God's precepts and those lawfully appointed to lead the individual to eternal happiness. There is another in which the individual is willing to give an indefinite obedience

to God, but chafes under restraint from another, and seeks uncontrolled freedom. Into the latter Luther appears to have fallen.

The granting of indulgences by Pope Leo X., was made the occasion of strenuous efforts against the Pope's authority, and subsequently led to an attack on the form of faith existing from the days of the Apostles. As many may not know adequately the meaning of an indulgence, it is not out of place here to explain it. All sins wilfully committed, violating any of God's commandments, or of any of the precepts of the Church which Christ established for the salvation of men, deserve punishment, eternal or temporal, according to the gravity of the offence. When the eternal punishment with the guilt that incurred it, is remitted by the worthy reception of the Sacrament instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins, it is the teaching of the Church, that a temporal punishment sometimes remains to be performed by the penitent, the person absolved from the guilt of his sins and the eternal punishment due to them. An indulgence means the remission of the whole or a part of this temporal punishment. An indulgence does not forgive sin nor the eternal punishment due to it.

Since Christ has imparted the power to forgive sins to the teaching or directive order of His Church in the persons of the eleven Disciples, to whom he said after His resurrection from the dead: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive,

they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (*John*, ch. XX, v. 22–23), why should it be thought an unwarranted assumption of the chief ruler of the Church to grant the remission of a temporal reparation for sin, which benefit is almost infinitely less than that conferred through the ministrations in the Sacrament of reconciliation?

The rulers of nations, and even less exalted officials, exercise the right to save the condemned from execution, to commute the sentence passed upon him by the appointed, the lawful dispensers of justice, or even to pardon the judicially convicted, if they deem there are sufficient reasons for exercising clemency towards him; why should it be judged unreasonable or beyond the power of the ruler of the whole Church, the successor of him to whom Christ said: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (*Matt.*, ch. XVI, v. 19), to exercise clemency in spiritual matters. But the attack on the right to grant indulgences was merely an out-post affair in the great campaign which Luther thus inaugurated against the whole Church. There was no definite scheme for conducting the campaign at its beginning; for Luther had not yet given form to the institution which he hoped would replace the Church he intended to demolish. Soon

almost every article of faith became the object of his attacks. Then the usual treatment of erring sons was practised by the officials of the Church to bring him back to the path of duty; but all in vain. All remonstrances, all friendly discussions, all efforts to make him retract were lost upon Luther. He had determined on a separate course, and resolved to follow it.

Finding all reconciliatory efforts unattended with success, Leo X. issued his bull of excommunication, June 14, 1520, against Luther. The sturdy doctor took occasion, from the reception of the bull condemning him, to emphasize his separation from all ecclesiastical authority by publicly burning the bull in the market place of Wittenberg. Having by this act renounced communion with the Church, he applied himself vigorously to the formation of a new system of belief. This, from its author, has been called the Lutheran faith, and all of its followers Lutherans.

In a time when all Europe professed one faith, it is not surprising that the civil law should contain some enactments in defense of the national faith against all who should assail it, because disturbance among the citizens, detrimental to the nation, was apprehended from the attempt to propagate new doctrines hostile to the established religion.

Governments had not yet reached that desirable state of granting freedom to worship according to

every form of belief, and to teach different religious doctrines.

Fortunately for Luther, though condemned by the representatives of the civil power, assembled at the Diet of Worms, the sentence of exile pronounced against him was not carried into effect for different reasons, but principally through the intervention of Frederick, Duke of Saxony, in his favor. Luther's doctrine soon found many adherents, and was propagated with great success in the provinces of Germany, and the countries north of Germany.

To ascertain the cause of its rapid extension, requires no laborious inquiry. It is found in the light, the insignificant demand made on its believers to make them as comfortable as they please in this life, and so happy in the life to come, that they cannot conceive its extent. It is probable Luther had no idea of the length he was about to go in his antagonism to the Church, when he disputed with Tetzel about indulgences; for if he had, he would hardly think it worth the while to bestow his efforts on such a trifling subject, when he meditated the rejection of the fundamental principles of Catholic faith.

There is a natural tendency in man toward a condition of unlimited freedom. He knows, either by intuition or acquired knowledge, that this condition is beyond his possible attainments, either in this life or in his future state of existence, for unlimited freedom cannot be enjoyed by a dependent

being, such as man is. The nearer he approaches, however, to unbounded liberty, the more he is pleased, and consequently the means judged by him conducive to the highest degree of freedom attainable will not be neglected.

The fulfilment of the duties imposed in some form of faith is the means by which man hopes to obtain eternal happiness.

Although, for the most part, those Christians dissenting from the Catholic form of belief admit that there is only one true Church, yet such unanimity of opinion does not exist as to the necessity of only one form of faith. Hence, the peculiar form of belief characteristic of each denomination of Christians. The duties imposed by the acceptance of the doctrines of non-Catholic bodies, however much they differ when compared one with another, are light when compared with those required of her members by the Catholic Church.

The Catholic has the same tendency and love of unlimited freedom as the non-Catholic, but he believes there is only one true faith according to the words of St. Paul, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (*Eph.*, ch. 11, v. 5). Knowing this, the Catholic restricts his liberty within narrower limits in matters of faith and morals than the non-Catholic, that he may not be deprived of liberty in his eternal state after his life on earth; but that he may by this restriction merit hereafter that true and sufficient liberty for his capacity, as a finite being,

which is enjoyed by the blessed in the Kingdom of God.

That system or form of faith rendered apparently credible by plausible arguments, and promising through its observance eternal happiness, if it make the burden of the duties it imposes light, or if it be less antagonistic to the passions and sensible part of man, commends itself to many for acceptance, rather than one which lays greater restraint and exacts the performance of heavier duties. Hence, Mohammedanism, though principally propagated by the sword, induced many people to embrace it, when they had surmounted the great difficulty of believing Mahomet to be, what he pretended to be, the prophet of God. It gratified the passions by indulgencing the senses. It may be said to offer its followers a paradise here, as well as paradise hereafter.

The Lutheran faith also offers many inducements to the Christian who can reconcile himself to its credibility. Instead of the Catholic doctrine, viz., that faith without good works is not sufficient for salvation, which is supported by the authority of St. James, the Apostle, who declares in his epistle, ch. XII, v. 26, that faith without good works is dead, Luther asserts almost a direct antithesis, saying faith alone in Jesus Christ suffices for salvation. Man, according to Luther's doctrine, being entirely corrupt, can perform no good work: hence, he is saved by the merits alone of Jesus Christ, through

his faith in Him. With the exception of Baptism and the Eucharist, all the sacraments of the Church were rejected by Luther; and it does not appear that even these two are absolutely necessary for salvation.

To subvert ecclesiastical authority and the priestly order, Luther taught the existence of a universal priesthood; that all Christians participated in the priestly character, being by their faith elevated to the performance of its functions.

In a time of great disquiet, both mental, political and social, those dissatisfied with the religious practices in force, the libertines, the lovers of novelty, and all who had any grievances, real or imaginary, against the authority of the Church, gave not merely attention but also a cordial reception to a doctrine that relieved them of the duties exacted by the Church, whilst assuring them of the attainment of the same desired object, viz., eternal happiness. It could hardly be expected to act as a deterrent from evil to believe that faith alone condones the greatest crimes that human depravity tends to commit. There is no incentive in it to the practice of a virtuous life, but rather an impulse to an irresponsible course of sin, provided the faith of the individual always exceeds his sin; but who can know that the degree of his faith in Christ exceeds that of his guilt in committing sin? As this part of Luther's doctrine gives a license to commit sin as long as the perpetrator is clothed with the panaceal

cloak of faith, the deeds of violence, of unmerciful fanaticism that followed might be easily foreseen.

If the Church did not condemn the cruel punishment by the civil power of former heresiarchs, she was made to feel a terrible retribution when seceders from her fold drew after them princes and potentates whose power was menacingly used to convert their subjects from the faith of their fathers.

So far was intolerance carried by the princely propagators of Luther's doctrine, that Lutheranism became the established religion in their dominions, to the exclusion of all other religions. To such a degree of assumption and daring did the more active followers of Luther proceed, that when there was a majority of Lutherans in the council of a municipality, which had hitherto been Catholic, a decree of the council was sufficient to abolish Catholicism, and prescribe Lutheranism as the only means in that place by which a man might hope to enter heaven. In few words, wherever mob violence or princely intolerance enforced by the sword, had rendered Lutheranism predominant, the option given to Catholics was either to embrace the new doctrine, or expulsion. It must be admitted this method from a human view of things was thorough, even efficient, for a time at least, in reaching the object intended, viz., the effacement of the Catholic religion from the countries where many causes conspired to establish Luther's peculiar form of faith. Such was the first lesson of liberty of conscience given to Europe by the inau-

guration of the new religious system. Nearly a thousand years before the existence of Lutheranism, Mohammedanism was propagated with far greater success by a similar process; but who among Christians, at any time, would believe, notwithstanding its alarming progress, that it would become the universal fold into which all the nations of the earth would pour their contingents? There was no reasonable hope, at any time, that Lutheranism could equal in dimensions the far-reaching limits of Mohammedanism; and how could it ever cherish the hope of becoming the universal faith of mankind, which that of the Church of Christ is predicted to be? Yet, notwithstanding its cold, frowning feature of intolerance, Lutheranism penetrated beyond the little states of Germany, finding a congenial home in the barren regions of Denmark and Sweden, where in an incredibly short time it became the established religion of the kingdoms by the will of the rulers.

The reason of its rapid success are obvious. The wilful deprivation of the salutary effects of the Sacraments, instituted by Christ as means to salvation, especially that appointed as a remedial for sins, forced the soul to rely on natural resources in its spiritual conflicts when assailed with temptations. Restraint of the passions was thus removed. What a flood of sins inundates the soul when the fear of them is removed by implicit confidence in the doctrine teaching irresponsibility for them! The withdrawal from all

ecclesiastical authority forced the substitute for the Church to the level of a social assembly. The mind was flattered, enthroned, when told that to it belonged the right to interpret according to its judgment the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, there being no preliminary qualifications of having acquired any certain degree of knowledge required.

Cupidity was not wanting to add its powerful stimulant to the introduction and profession of Lutheranism. It was well known that monasteries and many churches possessed considerable wealth. From various causes this wealth had been increasing for many ages, principally through the bequests of rich Catholics and the charitable donations of the faithful. It had always been regarded with that respect which members of the Church showed for whatever pertained to religious institutions; hence, in time of disturbance and even of war, it escaped the plunderers' dreaded visit. In the religious revolution, however, it did not escape the attention of the leaders, who saw in the profession of the new religion a license to enrich themselves by despoiling these sacred institutions of their treasures. The thought of injustice in perpetrating such robbery did not trouble their conscience, for it was silenced by the panacea of a crime-condoning faith.

A reaction at length set in: a reaction that confined Lutheranism within law-respecting limits. Several diets of the civil power had been held with the object of restoring peace to the disturbed condi-

tion of society throughout Germany. These, from the antagonistic religious sentiments of the members, proved abortive.

Charles V., then regarded as the greatest of Europe's sovereigns, viewing with dismay the threatening animosity of his German subjects against one another, resolved to try the effect of another diet to restore order in his troubled states, and harmony and good will to his warring subjects. The diet assembled at Augsburg, 1520, with the Emperor presiding. Here was formulated and presented the famous Augsburg confession by the supporters of Lutheranism. Its claims being deemed inadmissable by the Catholic members, it promised to produce interminable discussion without any beneficial results. The emperor, therefore, seeing it was useless to prolong the debates, put an end to discussion and to the diet, issuing his decrees on the matters in dispute, which he thought justly calculated to satisfy the merits of all parties.

These, however, did not satisfy the Lutherans, who manifested signs of discontent and turbulence. These gave rise to the apprehension of a bitter war to decide who was supreme in the state, the Emperor or the Lutheran party. The arbitrament of the sword was averted till 1547, when each party having made great preparations for the overthrow of the other, the hostile armies met at Mülberg.

An appeal to the sword should be avoided as much as possible by Christian peoples, who should

manifest that good-will which was deemed worthy of the Angelic salutation of peace at the birth of our Saviour. Neglecting the duty of mutual forbearance and the spirit of Christian toleration, some people allow themselves to be carried on the tide of misunderstood success, rashly confident in their numerical superiority, till suddenly they are dashed on the breakers of dejection and discomfiture. Thus it happened at the battle of Mülberg. Though much superior in numbers, they lacked that military training and guidance, the want of which no religious ardor, not even fanaticism, can supply. Their forces shattered by the imperial army, under the skilful command of Marshal de Saxe, the Lutherans might justly apprehend a deep humiliation to be inflicted on them by their provoked emperor. On his side, Charles had good reason to hope, that his military success being followed up with firm, yet conciliatory measures, he would eventually restore peace and unity to his distracted empire.

A political event, however, deprived the emperor of the fruits of his victory, and also saved the Lutheran party from further molestation.

Richelieu, the shrewd minister of Louis XIV., at the head of the government of France, closely watched the issue of the struggle in Germany between the emperor and the disloyal portion of his subjects. He dreaded the unity of Germany, which he perceived to be the object desired by Charles, and to which the emperor's success and

plans so clearly tended. Richelieu's clever diplomacy had for its object the deprivation to Charles of his preponderance of power in Europe. He wished to see France in the ascendant. For this purpose he spared no efforts whereby his acknowledged political skill could be made efficient. The victorious commander of the imperial army, Marshal de Saxe, was approached, secret negotiations were carried on, with the ultimate result of great detriment to the emperor by the transfer to France, effected by the marshal, of the three provinces of Meetz, Verdum and Toul. This unexpected event relieved the Lutherans of further humiliation and punishment by the emperor; for, viewing his altered situation through betrayal by his unfaithful commander-in-chief, he entered into negotiations with the leaders of the defeated party, which ended in the conclusion of peace.

Thus was Lutheranism, after it had extended its limits so rapidly by violence, accidentally preserved from subjection, if not extinction altogether; for in those days the strong arm of the state, on whatever side it was used in politic-religious disputes, proved an irresistible argument, as is amply shown by the history of the times.

CHAPTER XV.

LUTHER.—CONTINUED.

MOSES, when he received the great honor of being selected by the Almighty as the instrument to deliver from their Egyptian bondage the descendants of Israel, felt such diffidence in his own ability to accomplish such a work that he shrank from the honor, on account of the difficulties apprehended in the undertaking. Even when promised the Divine assistance and protection, giving him thereby the assurance that success would attend his mission, he still hesitated, expostulating with the Lord concerning his unfitness for achieving so great a work. Only when Aaron, who, it appears, possessed the gift of eloquence, was associated with him as assistant in the onerous task of delivering the Jews from the powerful grasp of Pharaoh, did he consent to become the Lord's ambassador, and enter upon his exalted mission.

The slavery which the Israelites suffered in Egypt was that of the body, a state of existence unfortunately not rare, or unknown by experience, to many peoples at different ages of the world's existence. It is a lamentable condition for man,

who was created to be free, and to whom was given the right of dominion over the whole earth, with the inferior creatures that live thereon. Though detestable, this species of slavery is not the worst which man is liable to endure; there is another still more oppressive, more degrading, more pitiable, it is the slavery of the soul. Many a noble spirit, whilst the body was subject to the task of the cruel slave-master, rejoiced in the freedom of the mind, especially when he contemplated and sighed for the glory of his future state which shall be the inamissible possession of those who have served God faithfully and perseveringly to the end of their life on earth.

The body does not draw the mind after it, but the mind the body. No wise man would give himself into bodily slavery, though he can do so; much less would he give himself into mental or spiritual slavery. This latter species of slavery is what was imputed to all professing the Catholic faith, by those who revolted from the Church in the sixteenth century. They declared she taught false doctrines, and, therefore, that she kept her subjects in bondage; for the natural tendency of the mind being towards truth and freedom, the opposite of these are falsehood and slavery. This assertion of the seceders that the Church acknowledged as the mother of all others of the true faith, and adhered to by the vast majority of Christians, teaches false doctrine, involves the question, can the Church which Christ established

err? This question will be considered in a subsequent part of this work. If it be supposed that the Church did err in her teaching, it must also be deemed requisite for leading her back to the teaching of sound doctrine, that more than ordinary means must be employed. The ordinary means to deliver the Israelites from their Egyptian captivity, would be the employment of successful military operations conducted against Egypt for that purpose; but the extraordinary or superhuman means used for their deliverance, was the effective use of the superhuman power with which Moses was invested. If, then, the corporal servitude of less than a million Jews drew to them the Divine compassion and protection to the extent of smiting Egypt with most afflicting chastisements, most destructive plagues,—principally as a favor for the fidelity of their patriarchal ancestors in worshipping.the true God during their lives, when nearly the whole of the human race was addicted to the worship of false deities; what might reasonably be expected from the same All-protecting God towards the hundreds of millions of Christians, who for centuries lived and died in the shackles of alleged spiritual slavery! And these would seem to have a much better claim to Divine care than the captive Jews, for they worshipped Him with supreme worship and no other; and they believed implicitly in His Son, through whose merits they hoped to attain to eternal happiness. Unlike the Jews, sighing for the flesh-pots of Egypt, they were willing to,

and did deny themselves of what ministered to the satisfaction and pleasures of the sensual appetite. Far from murmuring against the power ordering them to fast and do works of penance, they cheerfully obeyed the ecclesiastical law ; chastised their bodies, that thereby they might render themselves worthy of the endless pleasures of the blessed in the Kingdom of God. Who, for an instant, would doubt that God would have a special care for such loving, devoted subjects? Who would not believe that God, the Spirit of truth, would intimate to such willing servants that their alleged erroneous belief, their well-meant, but supposed false worship displeased Him, visit their teachers with condign punishment, even destroy the institution that it is supposed falsely claimed to be the repository of truth, whilst leading into error the peoples for whom His beloved Son's blood cried to heaven for pardon, compassion and protection? But in the many centuries from the Christian era to the sixteenth century, no sensible manifestation of the Divine wrath at the alleged spiritual slavery appeared to deter the spiritual guides from leading the people in the same path as had been done for so many ages by their predecessors. Where shall an explanation be found for this absence of Divine intervention in such a supposed state of spiritual bondage?

It being evident, without the use of argument, that God has, at least, as great a protective solicitude for those redeemed by the precious blood of

His Son, and who desire to and believe they serve Him, as He showed towards the Jews coming out of Egypt, who did not serve Him faithfully, but who displeased Him so much by their rebellious conduct as to render themselves deserving of the just punishment inflicted on them in the desert, it may be concluded that no real spiritual bondage existed in the Church, and that the allegation for it, when closely examined, will be found to be unsupported by reasonable proof.

As no visible, no sensible, indication of divine displeasure at the teachings of the Church which Christ founded was manifest from the first to the sixteenth century, and as no separation of members worthy of remark took place from that Church, except those who seceded in the eleventh century, forming what is designated the Greek Church, the principles of whose faith, if the belief in the Pope as the supreme ruler of Christ's Church be excepted, are almost identical with those of the Catholic Church, it is now to be examined whether the startling performances of a monk of the Catholic Church, in the sixteenth century, resulted from a divine commission received to correct the errors and abuses of the Church, or if it were an undertaking assumed by the monk, the impulse to which emanated solely from the operations of the faculties of his mind.

If Luther were commissioned by God to correct the teachings of the Church, doubtless he would be

invested with the insignia of so great an office, with the power, at least, of working miracles to convince the doubtful that he was a true ambassador from God; for the work undertaken to be accomplished is, after the redemption of man by a God-man, the most stupendous, the most interesting to man conceivable.

But Luther had no such supernatural power; he could not terrify the heart of the Pope, or any of the teaching order in the Church, by any superhuman sign, as Moses and Aaron did when they moved the heart of Pharaoh by miracles to let the children of Israel depart out of Egypt. He did not even assert that he was divinely sent for the reformation of the Church.

Some may say, however, that Luther, though not in a sensible manner commissioned by the Deity to effect great changes in the Church, was inspired from heaven to pursue the course he followed. The natural and reasonable rejoinder to such a supposed assertion is that no one is obliged, in a matter of faith, to believe any innovator on the strength of his own word or that of his admirers and supporters. For if credibility in faith be attributable to any person because of the assertion by himself or others that he is inspired by the spirit of truth to teach a doctrine opposed to the doctrine of the Church existing from Apostolic times, then any impostor, by a similar assertion, might claim attention to innovatory doctrine. Christ, the founder of the

Church, has not left her adherents in such a changeable, precarious condition. He has explicitly declared that the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, will teach His Church all truth, and abide with her forever (*John*, XIV, 16).

If, notwithstanding what has been said evincing the absence of divine authority for the singular course pursued by Luther, it should still be a matter of doubt how to regard him, the consideration of the character of the man, relative to the work undertaken, may lead to a satisfactory decision.

From Noah down to the last of those under the Old Law whom God had chosen for the accomplishment of any remarkable work, all were conspicuous for godliness, as practisers of the virtues so highly esteemed by all men. The Sacred Scripture bears testimony to the meekness of Moses. His love of retirement and freedom of ambition must impress the mind with admiration for a character so noble, so unpretentious, so transcending that of men generally, who aspire after honors, joyfully accepting whatever positions tend to increase their esteem, power and fame with men. So the characters of all those selected by God for any mission or position of honor will be found on inquiry to possess the virtues, in a high degree, which commend them to admiration, and afford to the truly wise an incentive to their imitation by others. Even Saul, before his appointment to reign

over Israel, was not destitute of the virtues that render the creature pleasing and acceptable to the Almighty. He evinces, in his conversation with Samuel, a true sense of humility regarding the family of which he was a member as among the last of Israel. Afterwards, however, he lost the divine favor by neglecting to act according to the instructions given to him by Samuel, the prophet and friend of God; by assuming the functions of a sacred office pertaining to those appointed for it by an ordinance of the Supreme Being; in general, by following his own judgment in matters in which the course of action was divinely prescribed. His reprobation followed, with a sad ending of his once promising career.

Perhaps the most awfully impressive manifestation of the divine wrath, against those assuming without right authority in spiritual affairs, is afforded in the case of Core, Dathan and Abiron who, for opposing the authority of Moses and Aaron, were engulfed, in the sight of the Jewish people, by the miraculous opening of the earth.

In the New Law necessity of godliness and the virtues that embellish the soul is much more strongly inculcated than in the Old Law. It has been emphasized by the author of the law Himself practising the virtues as a model for all His followers.

The circumstances in which the Redeemer of men wished to be born afforded a very instructive lesson

of His preference of poverty to riches, with the comfort and pleasures they may procure. The same lesson may be learned from the humble condition of His whole life. It is needless to state that He taught and practised charity; for His public life speaks most eloquently of His mercy, compassion and love for wayward man. We behold Him chastise His flesh by the long fast in the desert, though it does not appear that He had need of it to keep the body in subjection; but it afforded a needful lesson to all His followers directive of the means to be employed against the carnal propensities of man which, without a due restraint, will lead him to his ruin. His purity, His chastity, no man, not even His bitterest enemies, assailed.

What a lesson of humility He gives at that most affecting of all scenes, except the sacrifice on the Cross, the last Supper, when He washed the Disciples' feet. Christ did not practise these virtues in vain, or without a desired object. He desired all His followers to be imitators of Him, in sanctifying themselves by the practice of the virtues, for which He gave them in His own life the most perfect model. Of all Christians, the strictest imitation is demanded from all those who have been honored with admission to the state of Priesthood, who alone have the right to the performance of the priestly functions, which the Saviour Himself performed, and which He desired should be continued in His Church, to the end of time, for the salvation of men.

Tradition and the Acts of the Apostles furnish ample testimony of the fidelity with which the Apostles and the early Christians imitated their Divine Master, in the work of their sanctification. They practised poverty, for they divested themselves of whatever property they possessed; contributing it to a general fund for the use of all. Their charity, brotherly love, shone so conspicuously in contrast to the cold and selfish character of those professing other religions, as to powerfully influence all who observed them, with a most favorable opinion of the Christian religion. Conscious of the spiritual combat in which all men are participants, they felt the urgent necessity of keeping the flesh in subjection to the Spirit, by restraining the passions, guarding the senses, fasting, constantly eschewing whatever ministered to the inferior appetite, gratified the passions, or tended to indulge carnal propensity. Such are the means practised by the Christians in the first age of the Church, and such are the means practised in all other ages since, and will be to the end of the world, for the acquisition of the same most desired of all objects, eternal happiness.

The tenor of Christ's teaching is manifestly the performance of penance for sin, with the firm intention not to recommit it. An active charity, viz., the love of God and the love of the neighbor, true humility, self-denial, the rejection of everything tending to elate the mind, even at the performance of a good work.

We know from His discourse to His disciples on the Mount what are the works most pleasing to Him, and most meritorious for the exaltation of their doers in the kingdom of heaven. He indirectly warns them on another occasion to keep themselves in great humility, by telling them not to rejoice because the evil spirits were subject to them through the spiritual power with which they were endued, but to rejoice that their names were written in the Book of Life.

St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, admonishes all to work out their salvation in fear and trembling; hence the attainment of the highest sanctity does not exempt its possessor from the use of the common safeguards against falling into sin, because of the mutability of man's spiritual state, as well as that of his corporal condition during the whole of his earthly existence.

St. Paul speaks most forcibly of the necessity of a constant war against the flesh. He wishes all to be, like himself, unmarried (1 *Cor.*, ch. VII, v. 7), that the work of their salvation might thereby be the more easily accomplished. Some might think that one so highly favored by the Almighty, and assured of His grace, would have little to fear from the enemies of his salvation. He declares, however, that, far from being without fear, he has great anxiety concerning the evil tendency of the corporal part of his being, and that, notwithstanding

his elevation to the Apostolate, he is engaged in a great conflict. "I chastise my body," says the Apostle, "and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 *Cor.*, ch. IX, v. 27).

Finally, that the spirit of the Gospel of Christ demands a life of penance, humility, love and subjection of the senses, with the passions, to the rational part of man, that eternal happiness may be acquired, no one of ordinary intelligence, who has read it, can doubt. If, then, conformity of character to the teachings of the Gospel be required of every Christian, much more strictly should it be demanded of those of them who have been entrusted with the responsible duty of teaching and instructing the rest to the knowledge and practice of what they should avoid and what they ought to practise, not only by word, but also by the powerful means of good example, influencing all to the practice of virtue.

It may now be asked, had Luther's character this conformity? Does it resemble that of apostolic men; for not less should be found in him of the indications of holiness than in them, for they only helped to establish the Church, but Luther undertook to reform the whole Church? Where are the proofs of Luther's humility? Whoever, without sarcasm, pretended that he was humble, unless it would be to excite ridicule? Yet the practice of this virtue is expressly commanded by our Divine

Master, according to the Evangelist: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." But what of charity—that virtue without which, the Apostle Paul tells us, though he possessed the knowledge of all mysteries, had all faith so that he could move mountains, if he gave all his goods to feed the poor, he would yet be deficient of a requisite for entrance into the kingdom of heaven? The charity here referred to may be expressed by the observance of the two great commandments of the law, viz., the love of God and the love of the neighbor; we must love God above all things, for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves, for the love of God. Where is the evidence of this love existing in the heart of Luther? On the contrary, his writings abound in coarse, uncharitable and abusive terms, especially if the object of his attack be an antagonist who criticises Luther's religious opinions. The reader is referred to his tirade against Henry VIII., of England, as a sample. In Luther's invectives against Catholics and the Catholic Church are found a direct violation of the second of the two great commandments of the law. But why speak of charity, since Luther's system denies the possibility of good works, maintaining that man cannot do a good work, because he is wholly corrupt. With this opinion of man's impotence to do any good, it becomes evident that sound morality had no advocate in Luther.

How does this reformer of the Church compare with St. Paul, regarding chastity; the possession of which cost the Apostle an unceasing conflict in order to keep the flesh in subjection to the Spirit. Luther acts differently; he gives full reins to his sensual passions. The vow of celibacy, which as a monk he had made, formed no barrier to the indulgence of his carnal appetite; he broke it and married.

This is a very inadequate sketch of Luther's character, but, meagre as it is, it suffices to show that the virtuous characteristics of Apostolic men were conspicuously absent from the character of the man who had undertaken the superhuman work of reforming in its principles the Church which Christ established, and which already successfully withstood the fiercely blowing storms, religious and political, for fifteen hundred years.

Since Luther had no divine mandate to deliver the members of Christ's Church from the bondage of alleged error, as Moses had to deliver from their Egyptian bondage the Israelites; and since the knowledge of his character neither tends to elevate the mind nor inspires to holiness, it is not a little perplexing to the mind to discover sufficient reasons why any one solicitous about his state of existence after his life on earth, should accept of a doctrine diametrically opposed to that professed by nearly all Christians from the date of the establishment of their religion.

Many think but little and superficially of their future state, giving nearly their whole attention to what concerns their earthly life, how they shall attain to prosperity in it, and how they may save themselves from temporal injury. To such it is not surprising that a form of religion requiring but few and light duties to gain eternal happiness should be preferred to one exacting the conscientious performance of many duties, some even irksome to perform. Among the reasons assigned for a change of faith in times of religious revolutions this should not be overlooked.

Luther failed in the attempt to reform the Church according to his wishes, but he succeeded in drawing after him many of her members. A considerable portion of Germany and the sparsely inhabited countries north of Germany are the losses to the Church by the propagation of his doctrine.

In his lifetime, he could view the limits of the fold he had formed. It has but imperceptibly, if any, increased since. Even in these countries, the religion of the people is gradually losing its Lutheran characteristics. Though these are the gains of Lutheranism, yet its author, it is probable, by the law of cause and effect, deserves to be credited with a far greater share, if not the whole of the secessions from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century; others there were, who aspired after the honors of leadership in the religious world. As they came several years after Luther, when the Wittenberg

professor had already, by the extensive dissemination of his religious system, gained considerable celebrity, it may be reasonably believed that his writings, principally, instigated them to the formation of the systems of religion bearing their names. Their success, however, does not detract from his acknowledged claims to precedence, so that he remains the most conspicuous of the religious innovators of modern times.

Lutheranism, though it boasted of freedom of thought, yet was gravely inconsistent. It announced individual right to interpret the Sacred Scriptures, whilst requiring of its followers not to hold opinions contrary to those given in the system for belief, adjudging those trangressing the limits appointed guilty of heresy, and obliging them, in case of refusal, to leave the denomination.

If faith in Jesus Christ, with the Scripture as the only final authority in guiding one to salvation, be enough, what is the use or need of a religious organization imposing its peculiar tenets upon others, since it admits the right of all-sufficient individual or private interpretation. Here is an evident inconsistency. But a doctrine that teaches no restrictions to private interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures, must inevitably lead to religious anarchy; hence the establishment of authority for condemning and expelling those of the Lutheran organization, who should hold opinions contrary to those prescribed to be held in the Lutheran form of belief. Though

Luther could boast of no divine commission for his extraordinary course of hostility to the Church, yet he found a powerful weapon at hand to cut his way through all obstacles, and plant his standard of the new religion. This was the book of the Sacred Scriptures, so much revered by all members of the Church. To these writings alone, he attributed the authority of guiding men to their salvation. His rank of priesthood also received the respect and reverence of the faithful, because of its divine institution, whilst his professional lectures procured him no little celebrity.

When it is added that his novel doctrine fostered instead of repressing the passions and the inordinate, inferior appetites of man, it is not difficult to assign the cause of Luther's sudden rise to popularity, or the acceptability of his doctrine to the people.

The assumed authority of the Sacred Scriptures, so strongly relied on by Luther, will be considered in Chapter XVIII.

Lutheranism, in its inception or in its existence, more than Mohammedanism, presents no reasonable proof of its divine inspiration. Both, therefore, must be rightly judged as human institutions; both were founded and propagated by the same means, violence. Mahomet, with the sword, led his followers to the overthrow of all other religions but the one he imposed. Luther, personally, did not relish the wielding of the sword, a somewhat risky

performance when opposing foeman's steel, but had recourse to the pen, a no insignificant weapon for war or peace. He harangued, he instigated, he inflamed the minds of his followers to deeds of violence. Nothing was unholy to him by which he might accomplish the effacement of the Church in which he was tenderly nurtured.

Human achievements, human institutions, may be very imposing, inspiring something akin to wonder, but their instability will soon be apparent. They may have a long or short existence, without anything more than human being found in their constitution.

Arianism at one time threatened the Church much more seriously than Lutheranism; yet after its apparent successes, its decadence was felt, the number of its adherents gradually diminished, and if a few of their descendants still profess the doctrines of Arius in the East, it only shows how tenaciously man may cling to heresy.

Luther assailed the Church that successfully resisted the attacks of Arius, that withstood the religious storms of the centuries intervening between the ages of Arius and Luther; he assailed it with the design of a complete overthrow. How vain the attempt! In the century of its origin, in almost the lifetime of its author, Lutheranism attained its limits. The signs of its disintegration are not wanting; for, far from extending its boundaries, it is losing ground even in the land of its birth,

whilst the Church it sought to subvert has shown her superhuman vitality with renewed vigor, in the prosecution of the commission divinely committed to her to convert the nations, regaining lost ground, whilst extending the limits of her fold in new lands, till finally she accomplishes that mission, the conquest of the world for the Saviour of men.

CHAPTER XVI.

Calvinism, or Presbyterianism.

WHEN Luther had already acquired celebrity as the leader of a great religious movement in Germany and the north, a young man of much ability, John Calvin, appeared in France, eager for no less fame than followed the German doctor's career. Either proposed to himself and his followers the same final object, the pulling down, physically and mentally, of the Church of all ages, together with the erection of a structure as a substitute, manifesting its distinction from the other by its peculiar principles. Their dissimilar characters may be said to have borne the reflection of these principles. Luther, with a choleric temperament, daring to a degree, not denying his senses their gratification, operated in the open to win success to his campaign. Calvin, on the other hand, of a cold, phlegmatic temperament, austere in appearance, giving little indication of indulging the sensual appetite, concocted his plans and manœuvred for their success in secret. Luther began his campaign by attacking and gaining a portion of the lower and middle classes of the Church, rising to the position

and repute of a demagogue. Calvin aimed at nobler game; shrewd, and calculating the immense gain it would be to his cause to have some of the highest class, even of royal rank, he approached with skill and adroitness the ruler of France. The far-reaching design being penetrated, his temerity caused him a hasty flight into Switzerland, where he found suitable material in the Alpine inhabitants for ingrafting his doctrine. Here other authors of peculiar principles had labored before him. Calvin perceived that Zwingli's principles had a strong hold of the Swiss mind. His shrewdness and general ability enabled Calvin to supplant the doctrines of all predecessors by his own. In a short time he had acquired so much influence among the inhabitants of Geneva as to obtain the highest position, civil as well as religious, in the little republic.

In the office of chief magistrate, Calvin developed rapidly into a type of ruler unexpected, unappreciated. Those dissenting from his religious opinions were treated with great severity. If, in time past, the Pope could awe kings and emperors who might violate the moral law, or fail to fulfil their part in the mutual duties of the ruler and his subjects, Calvin could coerce, by punishment or the fear of it, into abandonment of opposition those dissenting from his opinions, political or religious. The advancement of an alien and a refugee to the first office in the country affording him an asylum, can scarcely be an actual occurrence pleasing to all. If

the person attaining to such an unusual honor show a character unsympathetic, severe, unmerciful to those differing from him in those things in which men often differ, viz., politics and religion, it would be strange if his throne were comfortable, or if his subjects did not endeavor to free themselves from such an undesirable master. Opposition from the Genevese might reasonably be expected. It accumulated such strength, and reached such an extent, as to place Calvin's faction in a minority in the little Alpine republic. Calvin had to yield the reigns of government, and seek safety in flight.

In this second exile, he watched the course of events in the troubled state in which he hoped to see the adoption of his principles enforced, and his party completely victorious. His expectations were not altogether disappointed. After three years of exile, Calvin, finding the tide of popular opinion turned in his favor, entered the Genevese capital, with the determination to rule with increased rigor, to enforce his doctrine on all who came under his sway. In his limited success, he found no little satisfaction in the humiliation of his opponents, for his own bitter days of banishment.

When Calvin had assured himself of a durable supremacy of his teaching in the republic, he made Geneva the nursery for his disciples, who should thence propagate the seed of Calvinism into other nations. The harsh features, however, of his doctrine greatly opposed its acceptance, except by

people of a phlegmatic temperament. The emissaries of Luther's great rival poured into France, and began their propaganda with alacrity. Here their impetuous assault on the Catholic Church caused much commotion. The immense weight of royal support to their efforts impelled them to seek adherents from the first class in the state, as well as laboring for the establishment of Calvinism as the dominant national religion. The reigning monarch, Charles IX., being in his minority, opposing factions of the nobles strove for supremacy in the kingdom, thereby to be in a position to influence and even control the actions of the royal minor, moulding his character according to their own political and religious principles.

The facility with which such a moulding of the youthful royal mind can be effected is convincingly demonstrated by actual cases in the same age. Edward VI., of England, was denied the religious training appointed by his dying parent, Henry VIII., who, notwithstanding his own wandering from the true faith, yet wished his son to be brought up in the Catholic faith. The guardians appointed to the royal youth promised compliance with the king's wish ; but they never fulfilled it, Edward being brought up in the religion of the Church of England established by law. The religious training of James I., of England, affords another example. Deprived of his Catholic mother, Elizabeth, queen of England, found it easy to have him instructed

in the principles of the Church of England, and brought up in the practice of her own religion. With the practical lesson, moreover, in these turbid times, of the potency of the sovereign, in the person of Henry VIII., of England, to abolish the system of religion followed by all England since it came to the knowledge of Christianity by the preaching of St. Augustine and his forty companions, in the sixth century, it needs no explanation to show why the Calvinists of France were so anxious to be aided by the supreme power in the state to eradicate the Catholic and supplant it by the Presbyterian form of worship.

They had already gained many supporters among the princes and nobles. The Bourbon prince, the able Prince of Condé, the Admiral Coligny and many others were ready to draw the sword for the overthrow of Catholicism and the establishment of Calvinism or some form of worship in imitation of their neighbors, the English and the Germans. The Duke de Guise stood firm in the faith of his fathers; he was the acknowledged leader of the Catholics.

The Calvinists, or Huguenots, the French term for the followers of Calvin, found an insuperable barrier to influencing the young King in the maternal solicitude of Catherine de Medici, guarding all approaches to her son.

It was a time of dark intrigue. The Huguenots held secret meetings; they entered into a conspiracy

at Amboise against the existing monarchical rule. Desecrated churches, pillaged cathedrals, massacres of the inhabitants in different places, marked the violent course of the Huguenots. What power was there to stem this torrent, with princes and nobles directing its course? Royalty was in a desperate state, and desperate action was judged necessary to maintain the established government and put an end to disorder.

Then followed the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, A. D. 1572; a blow to the Huguenots, from which they never recovered. Yet several attempts were made to propagate their doctrine throughout France, but the vast majority of the French remained faithful to the Church. The existence of Calvinism in France may be expressed as an intermittent war, the last incident of which was the siege of Rochelle, A. D. 1682.

Here the Huguenots made their final stand against royal authority. Cardinal Richelieu, the prime minister for Louis XIV., had the satisfaction to see all danger from religious trouble disappear with the capture of Rochelle, the last stronghold of the Huguenots. Henceforth they are hardly noticeable as an element in the entire population of France.

France was not the only theatre of the labors of Calvin's active disciples; in Germany, the attempt to disseminate Calvinism met with little or no success. Though many of its principles were identical with those of Lutheranism, yet all were not so.

When one differed with Luther in one tenet, he might hope for no religious commendation from the greatest of religious innovators; hence, there existed no amity between his followers and those of John Calvin. The Calvinists, therefore, diverted their course from the barren lands of Germany, in search of more congenial soil for depositing the seed of their new gospel.

Holland offered the most pleasing invitation. There the missionaries from Geneva experienced little difficulty in the prosecution of their endeavors to gain adherents to the new doctrine, for, although all the Dutch did not embrace it, yet many did, and what afforded them the most cheerful hope for the conversion of the rest was that the head of the state, the Prince of Orange, strongly supported it, fostering its propagation and adoption by his subjects.

Thus, the hostile treatment of Calvinism by the French was the more easily borne, by those at the head of it, at least, by its rapid success in Holland, with bright prospects in the future.

The land where Calvinism made its greatest, its most complete conquest, is Scotland. Even Geneva must yield precedence, in territorial extent and in the number of members also, to her Scottish offspring. Scotland was in a very unsettled condition at the time when the doctrines of Luther and Calvin set the minds of continentals in fury against each other. It had been governed for some years

by the widowed Queen of James V., until her daughter Mary should be of age to rule the kingdom. This daughter, known in history as Mary, Queen of Scots, had been espoused to the dauphin of France, known as Henry II.

What would be the result of this union, it would be futile to assert, but in political eventualities, at least, its significance could not be in any phase ignored by England's ruler. Henry died before attaining to his majority. It might be an occasion for rejoicing to the Court of England, for by it the royal couch of England was relieved of a hideous political nightmare.

The death of her regent mother recalled Mary from her brilliant position at the Court of France, where, on account of her high mental development, and graceful conduct, she had gained the admiration of all, to steer the Scottish ship of state in the worst of storms, a political-religious revolution. Hers was truly a pitiable condition. Young, beautiful, ennobled by her rare mental attainments, as well as by royal rank, she found herself suddenly surrounded by a heterogeneous nobility, regarding, for the most part, self-interest in their mutual relations, some of whom were scarcely less powerful, in the number of military followers, than the Queen of all Scotland. Dynastic stability had but recently manifested signs of durability throughout Europe. The Wars of the Roses, leading to that of England, were fresh in the memory of Englishmen. To

Scotland this stability was never to come. The Scottish people loved their young Queen, but the common people were mere instruments in the hands of their masters, the nobles, and these were disunited.

The inflammable material of Scottish dissensions required but the application of the torch to ignite it. John Knox, for some time exiled from Scotland, by the revocation of his sentence appeared in haste in his distracted country. Being an admirer of the doctrines contrary to Catholicity, he had eagerly imbibed, in his term of exile, the Calvinian principles which, when he found the door open to his native country, he spread broadcast over the land. Then were re-enacted the doleful scenes that characterized the Huguenots' course in France. In the meantime the adherents of Mary fought their last battle unsuccessfully at Langside, near Glasgow, against the disloyal nobles, May 12, 1568.

The vehement harangues of Knox incited his hearers to the effacement of everything Catholic in the land. As a result of his fiery denunciations against Catholicity, the Catholic worship was abolished by the Scottish Parliament in A. D. 1560, and the Presbyterian form of faith established instead.

Knox eclipsed all his contemporaries in the violent means applied to overthrow the Church that stood since the time that Caledonia from a state of barbarism entered into the Christian fold. His character is tersely expressed by the historic representation of

the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other. St. Paul, the most fiery of the Apostles, propagated the Gospel otherwise. He did not instigate his audiences to pull down temples of the heathen gods. He did not move his hearers by passionate harangues to demolish the Jewish Synagogue. He confined himself to the use of convincing arguments to show the falsity of other religions and the truth of the one he preached. But his method of establishing the Church of Christ did not suit the religious innovators of the sixteenth century, although they professed themselves disciples of the same Divine Master. England was not pleased with the peculiar form of worship of the Scotch, wishing to see her own, or Episcopalianism, established instead.

Hence there followed no little trouble between the two countries, after the accession of the later Stuarts to the united rule of England and Scotland. The Scotch stubbornly resisted the attempt to coerce them in their religious belief. So the dispute ended in the Scotch retaining their religious doctrine, while the Church of England, or Episcopalian Church, was established for the benefit of those whose religious sentiments tended thereto.

Scotland may be considered the ultimate bounds of Calvinism in Europe. These bounds in that continent have scarcely moved since the days of Calvin and Knox.

Like most other Christian denominations, Calvinism, or Presbyterianism, in later times found new

fields for its propagation in North America. But, except this, as proof of its extension, there is almost none.

All non-Catholic Christian bodies have their distinctive, peculiar principles. That of Calvinism, or Presbyterianism, relates to the predestination of man without merit by the Supreme Being, to a state of endless happiness, or eternal misery. Who can describe the gloomy effect of such doctrine on the mind?

Luther's doctrine cheers the blackest sinner who believes in it, assuring him that all his crimes cannot condemn him, if he has sufficient faith in Jesus Christ.

Calvin can hold out no bright hope to the sinner, nor indeed to the virtuous, for both may receive the same sentence of eternal damnation. This doctrine seems to be one of the evil results of private interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. There are passages in these, containing reference to predestination, from which it is possible for a person, depending upon his intellect, to draw erroneous conclusions. If Calvin, or any other, drew the conclusion of absolute predestination from the remarkable expression of St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans (ch. VIII, 29–30), treating of the operations of the Supreme Being towards man, he would do so from his own fallible judgment. If absolute predestination be admitted, then also must be admitted the unmercifulness of God; His assertions, that He desires the salvation of man, as mockeries, and all

good works in vain. But the vast majority of Christians believe in the mercy of God to man, and His desire to save him from the eternal punishment due to his sins. They believe also in the necessity, as well as the potency, of good works. The reason for this belief is given intuitively by the dictates of right reason, but more definitely and authoritatively for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, by the words of Christ in some of His discourses.

Taking one of these, His implicit condemnation of the works of the Scribes and Pharisees, speaking to His disciples, He says: "Amen, I tell you that unless your justice abounds more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.*, v, v. 20). St. James asserts, in the plainest terms, the absolute necessity of good works for salvation: that faith itself is dead without them. The Apostle's words are: "For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (*Ep. St. James*, ch. II, v. 26).

The easy inference from these passages is that exclusion from the kingdom results from the want of sufficient good works. From them, also, it may be inferred that no one is condemned arbitrarily, or without sufficient reason, by the Judge of all men: that is, no one is predestinated to a state in eternity without the concurrence of his free will, manifested in the nature of his works.

Though it cannot be truthfully imputed to God that He predestinates anyone to everlasting misery or happiness, irrespective of his works, it may, nevertheless, be asserted that He predestines, as a sequence to His foreknowledge of each one's goodness or wickedness, resulting from the good use and the misuse or rejection of the means afforded to all for acquiring salvation. Admitting the divine omniscience, this cannot be considered difficult of intelligence, whilst it may be satisfactorily argued that no injustice exists in such an appointment of man's eternal state. Its feeble representation may be perceived in an assumed temporal case.

If it be supposed that a father, having two sons, desires to make them equally happy by bestowing on them, at a certain age, a large portion of his wealth, ample to supply all their wants for life and its lawful pleasures, exacting, however, fulfilment of a certain condition for the reception of the gift, viz., obedience to all his commands, and the leading of a good moral life. One of the sons fulfils as well as he is able all the conditions, and not merely for the sake of the reward, but because he owes it as a filial duty to obey and honor his parent. The other, when the opportunity is afforded, disregards his father's injunctions, becomes lax in morals, frequents bad company contrary to the known wishes of his parent, and squanders in the meantime the money he receives for defraying the expenses incidental to his state in life. The father, deploring

the waywardness of his son, repeatedly remonstrates with him, that he may amend his life and not bring dishonor to his nearest relations nor plunge himself into irremediable misery. All expostulation proves fruitless, the affectionate parent sees no amendment, but rather the prodigal going from bad to worse. He determines, therefore, to sever all friendly relations with the undutiful son, revokes the conditional promise of enriching him for life, casts him forth penniless on the world where, the slave of his passions, he exists, the remainder of his days, in the most abject misery. This is but a faint representation in a temporal case of a spiritual one, and passing the bounds of time, even into eternity, where God predestines the wicked. There is this difference in the comparison, that whereas the motive, the knowledge of the earthly father, which caused him to cut off his perverse son from the intended inheritance, or some of the paternal property, has been acquired by experience in trying his son, the Heavenly Father has in perfection, from His infinite knowledge of all things, and therefore of the future as of the present and the past. This infinite knowledge does not affect the freedom of the human will, the final adhesion of which to good or to evil acquires for it a corresponding reward of everlasting happiness or eternal misery. This meaning of divine predestination, so consonant to reason, is the contrast of that contained in Calvin's doctrine.

Christian doctrine, taught by the true Church of Christ, though requiring belief in revealed truth exceeding comprehension by the mind in man's earthly state, demands no such faith in anything contrary to right reason. It does the greatest violence to his reason to require man to believe in the possibility of his hateful condemnation to a state of eternal punishment by the Supreme Being, without guilt incurred by the sin or offence committed by an action of the free will.

Man's reasonable hope to escape the punishment of hell, and to attain to the bliss of heaven, rests upon the infinite truth, mercy and justice of God. These divine attributes find frequent expression in the Sacred Scriptures, for the encouragement of all to lead a life of faith and sound morality. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." "The Son of Man came not to call the just, but sinners, to repentance. I will render to each one according to his works."

What is the meaning of these and of many similar passages of Scripture, if man, according to Calvinism, notwithstanding his faith and his repentance, manifested by the reformation of his life, be liable to eternal reprobation with evidence of the most pitiless mockery, the most hateful deception practised upon him?

Whatever other pleasing features such a religion as Calvinism, or Presbyterianism, may have, this

repulsive doctrine of predestination alone would mark it as not of the Church instituted by the God-man, who came on earth to enable man, by faith and good works, to attain to the object for which he was created, the never-ending happiness of the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Anglican Church—Episcopalianism.

WHILST Lutheranism and Calvinism exulted in the ceremonies of their inauguration on the continent of Europe, as rival churches to the Catholic Church, from which they had separated, another, almost simultaneously, sprang into existence in the southern part of the Island of Great Britain.

The English, like many other nations, have experienced the vicissitude of national life effected by the conqueror's will. The Angles, after the Romans, seem to be the first historic invaders of the island. Invited by some of the Britons for protection, as the English much later were invited by the Prince of Leinster against his countrymen, they bade adieu to Saxony, their native land, and sailed for the Island of Great Britain. Being of a warlike disposition, they overcame the native Britons, against whom they were sent, and refused to leave the island, when the object of their expedition had been accomplished; desiring to make so fertile a land their future home. In a short time, they extended their rule over the greater part of the island, forcing the

natives into the western part, called Wales. The country parcelled out among them was known as the Heptarchy. They, in turn, were vanquished by the Danes, who overran the country. By the skill and prudence of King Alfred, the good fortune of the Angles revived. His successes over the Danes infused hope and courage into the minds of his followers. The Danes were put on the defensive, forced to leave the country, or submit to the conditions of Alfred.

The last and successful invasion of England was made in the eleventh century by the Normans under their leader, William, Duke of Normandy, afterwards William I., of England. Though fighting bravely under their King Harold, the Angles suffered, at Hastings, an irreparable defeat. Henceforth the Norman element rules all England. It has continued since in the nobles, or English aristocracy, to hold the mass of the people at its disposal. The reason for this is to be found in the docility of the Anglo-Saxon character, or rather his devotedness to his acknowledged master. It is to this characteristic submissiveness that must be ascribed the pitiable condition into which nearly the whole nation fell in the trying times of religious agitation in the sixteenth century.

From Henry VIII., of England, much for the benefit of the Church might be expected. He gave evidence of his religious tendency by entering on

the studies necessary to qualify the aspirant to the priesthood.

The death of his brother Arthur, heir to the throne, caused Henry to abandon his ecclesiastical studies for the dazzling throne enhanced by the mighty power of the king. In the early part of his reign Henry's character deserved commendation. He was not devoid of chivalrous sentiments; sensitive of the nation's honor, he maintained its respect and dignity among foreign powers. At home his youth and genial disposition, in mingling with others on festive or other occasions of amusement, gained him the affection of his subjects.

For seventeen years he enjoyed domestic happiness with his virtuous consort, Catharine of Aragon. Henry was pre-eminently a man of pleasure. The delicacies of the table, the luxuries of the banquet and *ad libitum* at private repasts, ministered to his sensual appetites. These, as is universally asserted by the wise, as well as by all moralists, unless kept well in restraint, will ultimately usurp the place of reason, and dominate the person who has so basely catered for them and become their slave. Such may be said to have been Henry's experience. The constitution cannot long bear the strain of sensual indulgence without moderation. With increase of age, Henry became corpulent, morose, whilst the obsequiousness of those surrounding him from an early age made it hazardous for any man of self-respect to expostulate or manfully maintain his

own opinion, contrary to that of the king, in matters of dispute. Hence, the king had things generally as he pleased.

Henry was yet a young man when Luther attacked the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and strove to supplant them by his own. The king had no sympathy with the great religious innovator. Having an inclination to polemics, as well as to show his sentiments on the religious agitation of the time, he wrote vigorously against Luther and his novel principles. This royal enthusiastic defense of the Catholic faith gained the appreciation of the Pope, who conferred on the King of England the glorious title of Defender of the Faith, which the sovereigns of England have ever since retained as one of their privileged titles, although separated from the Catholic Church.

Though in his writings against Luther's principles Henry gives evidence of his sincere attachment to the Catholic Church, it is quite possible that the anti-Catholic doctrinal opinions widely disseminated by Luther and other noted seceders from the Catholic Church produced their disturbing influence on the king's mind, contributing to his adoption of that peculiar position in religion which he afterwards held even till his death. What Henry wished was not so much novelty in religion, or immaterial substance, but rather what appeared in the corporal or material form.

Even to a king, the repeated exhibition of the same objects, however attractive, the repetition of delightful feasts, the continuous strains of the most excelling music, will in time pall on the mind, glut the senses of him who sets no bounds to his worldly pleasures, nor aspires after those true celestial joys promised to those who deny themselves the temporal joys of earth, that they may experience those of heaven and for eternity.

Henry's love of novelty extended not only to things lawful, but also to the unlawful. The virtues of a faithful wife, his consort for seventeen years, were powerless over the carnal-minded king, who placed his affections on a younger, and in the eyes of Henry, a very attractive lady of the court, a maid-of-honor to the Queen; this was the unfortunate Anne Boleyn. Having conceived the illicit passion, he desired to consummate a new matrimonial alliance. It was in attempting this that the trouble of his life began. Henry knew that the bonds of marriage once consummated are inseverable, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church. But he thought that by alleging plausible reasons for the invalidity of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon, he might succeed in obtaining a divorce.

Henry was not without resource in the difficulties that beset his amorous course. He pleaded his alleged qualms of conscience, in having, as wife, his deceased brother's spouse. He applied to Rome for a sever-

ance of the matrimonial bond. The Pope found no valid reasons to accede to the King's request. However, he appointed a commission of Cardinals Wolsey and Compeggio, to investigate the matter before giving a final decision. Henry, meanwhile, sent the case to the universities of Europe for their opinions, which he hoped would be favorable to him. But in vain, the universities decided against him. Henry, however, was not to be balked. The dilatoriness of the commission exasperated him, so he turned for consolation and satisfaction to others, who would not fail to comply with his wishes.

In 1532 the Archbishopric of Canterbury, the primatial See of the country, became vacant by the death of Archbishop Warham. This incident afforded the king the opportunity of effecting, with the appearance of the sanction of religion, the twofold project upon which he had set his mind. There were royal minions to be found in the Church as in the state. Henry created a sensation by usurping the Pope's office of appointing bishops to vacant bishoprics. Into the primatial See of Canterbury he thrust Thomas Cranmer, who rewarded his royal master by the promptness and completeness with which he disposed of the king's matrimonial case. The royally-made Archbishop cited Henry and Queen Catherine to appear before his court. No forensic effort was required to show Cranmer the course he should pursue. The marriage, which had lasted more than seventeen years, and of which

five children were born, was pronounced null. The king's matrimonial union to Anne Boleyn was immediately publicly announced; they had been married clandestinely some time previously. When the Pope, Clement VII., learned of Cranmer's summary proceedings, he condemned his action, reversed the decision and maintained the validity of the first marriage. The action of the Pope enraged the king, giving the final impetus to his hostility to the Pope. Henry declared the supremacy of the Pope in England at an end, proclaimed himself supreme in church as well as state; exacting from all his subjects the acknowledgment of his supremacy under the penalty of treason. This was the beginning of what is known and exists as the Anglican Church. The bishops and clergy did not want the change, but protestation and opposition from them would be met with such arbitrary measures emanating from the court as would deter all but the bravest from attempting to defend the faith of their fathers. Henry simply terrorized all England. From the highest to the lowest in the realm, all were subservient, with a few noble exceptions. The most nauseously obsequious of all was, perhaps, the man who should be foremost in opposing the king's tyrannical course, and in admonishing him of the evils consequent to a life of iniquity. The days had passed when an Archbishop of Canterbury had the courage to withstand a more powerful monarch than Henry; but that monarch, with all his faults,

was not a despot of the Tudor type. But then, Cranmer was the creature of the king, and who might look for courage or solicitude for the maintenance of any kind of faith in the unamiable character of the man so expressively portrayed in few words by Macauley.

Henry, by his usurpation of the highest spiritual office in the Church in England, became virtually pope, as well as king. The mutilation and transmutation of Catholic doctrine, rites and ceremonies, soon became apparent to the masses. They murmured, but had to suppress and stifle the expression of their disapprobation. There were, however, in some parts of the country, both north and south, hostile demonstrations against the religious innovations. These disloyal subjects of the royal pope placed their faith above everything. They were soon vanquished by troops sent against them, and their ghastly heads hung up in various parts, dangling in the air, gave a dreadful warning to all who should have the temerity to assert their religious belief, contrary to the royal pleasure.

The noble, peerless conduct of Sir Thomas Moore, Lord High Chancellor, the highest official in the kingdom, and that of Cardinal Fisher, in refusing to accept the king's supremacy in the Church, should have inspired the rest of the great men of England to resist the incipient despotic rule. These exalted dignitaries lost their lives, as many other distinguished persons did, by the command of the tyrant,

but, in return, obtained the priceless martyr's crown. As disease and decrepitude overtook the king, more from sensual indulgence than from old age, his moroseness, severity, and intolerance of opposition to his will, increased in proportion. None of his intimate friends could rely with safety on his friendship, none, even of the most powerful of the nobles, could be free from the apprehension of hearing that he was doomed to the dreaded block.

The crouching attitude of all classes turned the king into a veritable monster. Many thousands of his subjects, who had the courage to retain their conscientious belief, despite the royal decree, ended their lives on the block, the gallows, and at the burning stake. If it be true as recorded in history, that Henry sent into eternity by violent deaths, upwards of 70,000 persons of all classes, from the duke to the peasant, it must be admitted that for deeds of blood and human sacrifice, outside of actual warfare, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find his equal in all history. The Scyllan and other Roman proscriptions decrease in their enormity, in comparison with the black list of Henry. It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that the king's ire was kindled only against Catholics. Catholics and non-Catholics perished side by side; the former for denying the king's supremacy in the Church, the latter for denying the real presence of the Lord in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Henry's belief found no type in the then-existing creeds, nor has it in any

of the Christian denominations which have sprung into existence since.

Whatever religious creed he adhered to was of very indefinite form. He retained some of the principles of Catholic doctrine, others were supplied from the royal mind and enforced by the convincing means of physical power. It is evident that the introduction of Anglicanism to supplant Catholicism must be ascribed not to the conviction that the latter was erroneous, and some other form of religion orthodox, but to the anger and hostility of a king, swayed by passion, against the principal dignitaries of the Church because he found them non-compliant with his wish to sanction an unholy, sinful matrimonial union. Henry had no sympathy for the religious innovators of the sixteenth century. He held little, if anything, in common with them. Yet he could not stay the huge wave of the religious revolt that approached the English coast from the continent, and finally swept over the kingdom, depositing the germs of strange doctrines. There were not wanting zealous missionaries of the new creeds finding numerous adherents on the continent to attempt their propagation in England, even with the prospect of personal danger. But the national spirit asserted itself against foreign importations.

There were some men around Henry who knew how to humor his dangerous whims. They foresaw, what might be apparent to the close observer, that release from the king's rancorous disposition, aided

by his sensual, luxurious indulgence, would by his early death rid the country of many woes. They had a prospective king in the boy Edward, Henry's son, whom they had reason to believe they could mould, both religiously and politically, according to their hearts' desire. The king, however, approaching his end, exacted from the guardians whom he had appointed for his son, until he should become of age, a promise to bring him up in the Catholic faith. It appears from this fact that, shortly before his death, he awoke to a sense of his wrong doings, realizing, at length, the calamitous nature of separating from the Catholic Church, and wished to remedy the evil by restoring the nation to the bosom of the Church through the royal power and sound Catholicity of Edward. How vain the hope! how ineffectual such a promise! What faith could be placed in the word of those who, to save their lives from the displeasure of a dreaded monarch, might regard duplicity a necessity.

Not long after Henry ceased to live, when he had been summoned from mortal proscriptions to appear for judgment before the King of Kings, the Judge of all men, of Whom it is written: "Revenge is Mine and I will repay," Duke Somerset, the chief guardian, ignored his promise to the king, and caused the boy-king to be instructed, not in the Catholic doctrine, but in a mongrel form of faith, which had not yet received definite shape. This forms the basis of the new national Church. Its tenets and principles

were defined in A. D. 1562, from which date it is termed the Anglican Church. The sum of the faith of its members was declared in that year, by the composition of the Thirty-nine Articles; more recently in A. D. 1662, Anglican doctrine appeared in a more elaborate, and more comprehensive compilation, comprised in what is called the Book of Common Prayer. Since that time, it has been passing through the interminable phases characterizing all Christian denominations having their origin in the religious revolt of the sixteenth century. Anglicanism has not divested herself of all that is Catholic. She has retained many of the principles and ceremonies of the Church of all ages. She believes in, and administers the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Since she believes in Episcopacy, and strives to trace, with pride, though unsuccessfully, a continuous line of prelacy to the Apostles, it is reasonable to conclude that she admits Orders as a Sacrament, or regards them somewhat similar to a Sacrament. She differs from both Lutheranism and Calvinism; from the former, principally concerning the circumstantial presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the Anglicans rejecting consubstantiation; with the latter, she disagrees on the subject of Christ's atonement for sin, the Calvinists, or Presbyterians, believing in only the particular efficacy of Christ's death, or that He died for only a part of the human race, while the Anglicans retain almost the identical Catholic doctrine that, though

all may not be saved, yet, the Saviour of men died for all.

The condemning characteristic of Anglicanism, not indeed particular as belonging to her alone, but common to her with the other seceding bodies from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, is the rejection of a living authority established by Christ for the guidance of all men to eternal salvation, with the assumption of the Scriptures contained in what is called the Old and the New Testaments, as the absolute guide to salvation, to be interpreted by man's fallible judgment.

No religion can be stable whose principles are unstable. As man's judgment is not unchangeable on many subjects, it is not difficult to perceive that it could find a labyrinth in many passages of sacred Scriptures which are difficult to be understood, as St. Peter characterizes the writings of St. Paul. It is admitted as a maxim that, in all social bodies, such as the Anglican Church is, the majority rules. But as the opinions of the majority fluctuate when applied to their religious belief, their religion must necessarily vary in accordance. This cannot be said of the religion which Christ established for the salvation of souls; for whatever is necessary unto salvation cannot admit of different interpretations, or its definition cannot vary.

Regarding the origin of Anglicanism, it cannot be asserted, with truth, that the masses of England's population accepted it of their own free will, unin-

fluenced by the fear of punishment if they continued to profess Catholicity; yet it would be untrue to say that they did not assent to it with their wills, for no earthly power can deprive man of the freedom of his will in religious belief. The exercise of that freedom, however, under autocratic or polyarchic tyranny, may cost him his earthly life; but this is an insignificant sacrifice compared with the priceless reward of the kingdom of heaven, promised by Christ to those who shall remain faithful to the end. He expressly declares that whosoever shall deny Him before men, He (Christ) shall deny him before His Father in heaven. Hence, whoever renounces the Catholic faith, believing it to be the true faith, through the fear of earthly punishment, or the loss of earthly goods, the visible means of his support, denies Christ, and incurs the reprobation contained in the foregoing words, in substance those of Sacred Scripture. The English, therefore, who passed from Catholicism to Anglicanism, to save their lives or their property, are inexcusable.

No man is worthy of the kingdom of heaven who is not willing to lay down his life, if necessary, for what he believes to be the true faith; for Christ explicitly exacts this test of their fidelity from all His followers, in the event of extreme persecution by their enemies.

It could not reasonably be expected that a people forced, either morally or physically, into a church, could have any sincere attachment to it, or devote

themselves to its growth or maintenance. Hence, its dissolution cannot surprise anyone knowing the influence and power by which it came into existence, which, when withdrawn from it, as the source of its maintenance, it must necessarily give place to another, more in harmony with the people's aspirations after eternal life.

The process of the disintegration of the Anglican Church began soon after its establishment by act of parliament as the national Church. In a brief period, the number of dissenters from it increased so rapidly as to form rival churches to that established by law. If the number of these dissenting bodies, viz. the Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Unitarians, etc., be subtracted from the population, together with the vast number who attend no church, who practise no religion, it will be found that Anglicanism can present but a very unimposing array of adherents. Its principal supporters are those whose interests are involved in its maintenance and in its fall. The great mass of the people have little concern about its existence, or non-existence. Hence it is a failure as a national Church. But it would be preposterous to regard it as the universal Church, the fold of Jesus Christ, into which all those destined for the kingdom of heaven must be gathered. It has some adherents in the sparsely settled colonies founded by England in Southern Africa, New Zealand, and Australia. Other denominations, with the Catholic Church

also, claim their proportionate share of the inhabitants of these places.

But there has been no attempt to convert the world to Anglicanism, or if there has, it was a most complete failure. Among the disintegrating elements of Anglicanism, a most remarkable one, and continually augmenting, is that drifting towards the Church of their forefathers, the Catholic Church, the manifest fold of Christ. About the middle of the nineteenth century, there began at Oxford a religious movement, that soon spread consternation in the ranks of Anglicanism. Men distinguished for greatness of mind, as well as prominent members of the Anglican clergy, experienced a religious thirst which they found the established Church unable to satiate. They devoted themselves to mutual enlightenment by keen discussions, while applying themselves assiduously to a thorough investigation of what pertained to true Christianity. The result of their researches led some into the Catholic Church. Others, not finding the conviction sufficiently strong for such a course, remained in the established Church to metamorphose it to such an extent as to make a pious Catholic almost excusable, who should find himself, by mistake, assisting at the celebrations or devotions in an Anglican Church of the progressive or liberal class, thinking he was in one of his own religion. This Catholicising tendency causes much disturbance throughout the entire Church, giving no little anxiety to the conservative portion, who wish to see the

chasm between Anglicanism and Catholicism as wide as possible. Two most distinguished and talented members of the Anglican clergy found their way into the Catholic Church soon after the Oxford movement. These were Archdeacon Manning and Dr. Newman. These, many years after their conversion, became members of the College of Cardinals. They were the heads of a stream of converts which has flowed ever since with increasing volume, from the Anglican into the Catholic Church.

There is the strongest evidence and no doubt can be entertained of the innate yearning of a vast portion of the Church of England for union with the Catholic Church, from which their forefathers were so violently separated in the sixteenth century. That this union may be consummated should be the prayer of every true follower of Jesus, manifesting his desire for the unity of the great Shepherd's flock.

In this and the three preceding chapters, the author of this work has confined himself to a consideration of the three religious creeds, or churches, formed by the great secessions from the Catholic Church, primarily caused by Luther's revolt against that Church in the sixteenth century. There are other non-Catholic denominations, who rival in numerical strength the three churches already considered. There are Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Congregationalists, and others, some of which count the vast majority of their adherents in North America. But, as most of these

are of recent origin, and issued from the three churches spoken of, retaining most of their principles, and but slightly differing from them, the particular consideration of them has been omitted, that, it is hoped, a profitable discourse may be had upon the depository of the true faith, and what constitutes the fundamental error of all non-Catholic Christian churches.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The True Christian Church.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the establishment of Christianity by Christ, the Saviour of men, the Mosaic or Old Law ceased to exist as a complete operative law, binding to its observance for the attainment of salvation.

In the formation and for the continuance of any social or religious body or community there are laws to be observed, deemed necessary for possessing the objects proposed for attainment by the members of such bodies. These occupy the place of rules by which the members know how to conduct themselves in avoiding what is prohibited, and performing what is prescribed as general or particular duties. Thus nations, for the general benefit of the inhabitants, and municipalities, for the particular benefit of the citizens, have their special laws.

In the institution and for the propagation and continuance of Christianity, the absence of a written law is a most remarkable characteristic. To what should this absence be attributed? Not to any imperfection in the divine ordination for man's salvation. Not to the inability of Christ to conceive and

ordain a law; for he was God, as well as the most perfect of men. A little consideration of the aims and objects of Christianity, may suffice to lead to a satisfactory answer to the question.

The aim of Christianity is the christianizing of all nations; its object, the salvation of mankind. As men will in the future, as they have in the past, exist in all ages till the end of the world, there exists the necessity for affording the means in all ages since the establishment of the Christian religion, to acquire this most important of all objects, man's salvation; consequently, the Christian Church wherein is taught the doctrine, by the observance of which the possession of eternal happiness is assured, must necessarily exist. Societies formed by men, having human welfare as their object, depend for their maintenance and success upon the use of human means or instruments, one of which is a written law.

The institution of the Christian religion transcends all merely human works; for its author, Jesus Christ, being God as well as man, infinitely excels all men; hence, it cannot be included in the category of merely human works, nor can it be subject to the same means or requirements for its perennial existence, invincibility, and its assured victory over all the enemies of Christ.

The continual training of the teaching element in Christ's Church, whereby the members of each succession learn the doctrine from their living pre-

decessors, and imbibe their spirit, obviously renders it unnecessary to have a written law for their guidance in teaching sound doctrine, and for their general conduct. Though this should be admitted as a sufficient reason to account for the absence of written law by the Divine Founder of the Church, yet it is not the only reason nor the weightiest. If the *viva voce* law-giver of any nation or institution were ubiquitous and immortal, assuring the society of his constant guidance, there would evidently be no need of a written law. Christ has assured His Church of His omnipresent assistance in all ages, according to Sacred Scripture. Speaking to His disciples, before His ascent into heaven, He said: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*St. Matt.*, ch. XXVIII, v. 19–20). In another passage Christ, speaking of the Holy Ghost, says: "And I will ask the Father and He shall give you another paraclete that He may abide with you forever, the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you (*St. John*, ch. XIV, v. 16–17). From these passages it is evident that both her divine Founder and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity continually enlighten,

teach the necessary truth and guide the teaching body of the Church till the end of time. Therefore, the human means of a written law is not required, since the omnipresence of the spirit of truth replaces it, enlightening, to answer all questions, to decide all cases of doubt or dispute.

It is of the greatest importance to all who are in doubt as to the true Christian Church, or who unprejudicedly search to find it, to know that Christ has so constituted His Church as to be thus taught and ruled by the traditionary *viva voce* form of government, rather than by the interpretation by the members of the hierarchy of the Church in their long series from the beginning of Christianity till the end of the world of one great written law, visibly issuing from Christ which might, in the lapse of time, be variously interpreted just as the contents of the four narratives by Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are differently interpreted by the differing denominations of Christians. It is also of the same importance to understand that purity and integrity of doctrine are assured to Christ's Church in this form of teaching and government by the incessant fostering, protection, and guidance of the Church, by the spirit of truth and also by Christ, its founder. Bearing these truths in mind, and before answering the question, Which is the true Church of Christ? it must be understood and admitted as an axiom, that there is but one true Church: for it is plainly stated by Christ, when

speaking of the institution which He destined as a means for man's salvation. Notably does He speak of it as a single institution or establishment, by the words He addressed to St. Peter, when the prince of the Apostles declared Him to be the Son of God: "And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, asserts the unity of the Church where he says, "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God, and Father of all," (*Eph.* IV, v. 1–5).

It is unnecessary to adduce more Scriptural proofs, for it should be evident to every one exercising the faculty of reason, that Christ cannot be the author of two or more forms of faith, differing essentially from each other; for He is "the way, the truth, and the life." He cannot, therefore, be the author of two or more antagonistic doctrines for salvation, whereby man might be led astray. Admitting then, as an indisputable truth, that there is but one true Church to which all hoping for salvation must adhere, the answer to the question, which of all the separate bodies claiming and professing to be the Church of Christ, is the true Christian Church? There are two courses, either of which may be pursued to give a satisfactory answer; they may be termed the Catholic or religious method, and the historical or ordinary method of establishing the verification of any event in which men are con-

cerned. The Catholic Church teaches that the true Church of Christ has four marks or characteristics by which it may be known, viz., it is one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. It is one, because all its members profess the same faith, partake of the same Sacraments, and are all under one visible head, the Pope, successor to St. Peter, and vicar of Christ. Holiness is attributed to the Church, because Christ, her founder, is holy; also, because it teaches a holy doctrine, and by reason of the conspicuous holiness of many of its members in all ages, from the inception of Christianity by the promulgators of the Gospel. Catholic, or Universal, is applied to it, for, destined to save all willing to be saved, it necessarily exists in all ages and in all nations, unless where the people have repelled it.

The Church is termed Apostolic because it continues in existence from the time of the Apostles, whom Christ commissioned to establish it in the various nations of the earth; so also it will continue to exist to the end of the world. Although this is a true characterization of the true Church, yet, if the last character be excepted, it might not be judged sufficiently convincing to those who have been nurtured from youth with the teachings of a doctrine differing from that of the Catholic Church. They might assert that unity is a character common to each separate church; that it is not without virtuous and holy members. They might also assert the character of Catholicity, however un-

warranted or disputable it may be. Hence they might not be willing to concede these as peculiar marks of any church. The historical method, the one commonly used for verifying any event or occurrence, seems the easier, the less liable to objections and the strongest to bring conviction to the mind where uncertainty prevails. It may, therefore, be adopted to distinguish the true Church of Christ from all others. Before entering on the chronological inquiry of the establishment of each of the churches professing Christianity, three things are assumed as evident, and therefore admissable by all. The first is the Church's unity. Belief in its principles must be professed by all its members. What it commands or forbids as necessary to salvation must be equally observed. The second is the Church's indefectibility, or its necessary continuance without interruption, from the time of its institution till the end of the world. This perennial existence of the Church follows from the object intended and declared by its divine Founder, viz., the salvation of all those who will to be saved, from its beginning to the day of judgment. The third is the infallibility of the Church; that is, it cannot err in its teachings of what pertains to faith. This must be admitted, as a sequence to the admission of the Church, as a necessary means to man for salvation; for if the Church errs as a whole, at any time, it ceases to be the reliable guide, as it professes to be, to the attainment of eternal happiness. But the possibility of

error is precluded by the assurance which Christ, its founder, gives: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (*Matt.*, ch. XXVIII, v. 19–20). And regarding the continual presence of the Holy Ghost: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give another paraclete that he may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth," etc. (*Jn.* XIV, v. 16–17). In these passages a reliable guarantee is given to the Church of its inerribility.

The dates of the institution of the different churches may now be inquired into, with the object of ascertaining which of them has the longest duration of continued existence; or, in other words, which of them can show an uninterrupted existence from the days of the Apostles, in the first century of the Christian era. The inquiry will be confined to the great Christian denominations spoken of in a previous chapter. The inquiry begins with the Lutheran Church; from its name, one readily judges that it sprang from Luther. What does history say of Luther? It states that he was a Catholic Monk, who revolted in the early part of the sixteenth century from the Catholic Church, preached a new doctrine, and instituted the Church which bears his name. History does not show the

existence of the Lutheran Church before Luther's time, therefore it is deficient of sufficient age to be the true Church of Christ, which continues without interruption from Apostolic times. The reader is referred to any reliable life of Luther for fuller particulars regarding his separating from the Catholic Church, and his preaching a new doctrine to which his followers adhere.

Calvinism, or Presbyterianism, presents the same lack of age in existence as Lutheranism, to give it any claim to be regarded as the true Christian Church. As it had its origin in the sixteenth century, almost contemporaneous with that of Lutheranism, all written history previous to that time is intelligibly silent about it. The Christian world in all preceding ages had been spared the enunciation of so harassing, so pitiless, so terrible, a doctrine as that one portion of the human race is predestined unconditionally to eternal happiness, and the other to everlasting misery. God is just, and no man will be condemned unjustly. The mind turns away in horror from the gloomy, harassing thoughts engendered by such a doctrine. As Calvinism had no constituted form of existence prior to the days of Calvin, who lived and died in the sixteenth century, and as Calvinists do not claim any, it may be dismissed without further remarks, as unworthy of longer examination in the search for the true Church of Christ.

The Anglican Church, or, as it is sometimes called, the Church of England, deserves some notice in our religious investigation; not so much from its own merits as from the greatness of the nation from which it bears its name. English history presents to the reader Henry VIII. as its father and founder, not indeed in its present form; for, on account of the simmering mass of its members, it has assumed many since his days. All England was Catholic for nearly a thousand years before Henry's time. Even Henry enjoyed the reputation of being an exemplary Catholic king until unrestrained passion got the mastery of him. The cause of the king withdrawing from observing the laws of the Catholic Church, and virtually constituting himself pope over the once Catholic Church of England, but under him transformed, by a system of terrorizing, into the Anglican Church, has been so plainly stated in history, so widely read, as to require no iteration here.

The object sought here is the date of the establishment of the Anglican Church as a separate, distinct church, by its form, from all others, to ascertain if its descent can be traced from Apostolic time, or from the first century of the Christian era. What does history, anterior to the sixteenth century, say of this Church? It says nothing at all from the evident reason that it belonged to the unknown. The Anglican Church, therefore, having no historical proof of existence before the sixteenth

century, completely fails to satisfy the inquiry for the true Christian Church which must have an uninterrupted existence from the days of its divine Founder till the end of the world. These are the oldest—the Greek excepted—non-Catholic, Christian institutions that are worthy of some investigation to any one in search of the true Church.

There are other large Christian non-Catholic bodies, as the Methodists, the Baptists, etc.; but, as history gives them all a still more recent date of origin, it is unnecessary to dwell at length on the consideration of them; for all have the same condemning defect, the want of time, to give them a reasonable claim to be considered the Church of all ages, from the time it was founded by Christ.

Proceeding in our inquiry, we find only two distinct Christian Churches or religions existing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, before Luther had formed his plan for instituting the Church that bears his name. These two still exist; they are the Catholic and the Greek Churches. There were also then as there are now, near the close of the nineteenth century, little Christian communities, the remains of once powerful heresies, such as the Arian, Nestorian, etc.; but as no one would pause at these expecting to find in any of them the object of our inquiry, knowing that their ancestors, the originators of the heresies, had fallen from the Catholic Church in which they had at one time membership, it would evidently be profitless to

include any of them here among the names of the great religious bodies claiming to be the true Christian Church. We, therefore, dismiss all consideration of them, confining ourselves to an examination of the claims of the Catholic and Greek Churches, the only large Christian bodies prior to Luther's time. Tracing the Greek Church to its origin, we cease to find its name, or any account of it in any history anterior to the eleventh century. In that century the Christian world professed but one form of faith, with the exception of the little heretical communities already referred to. Photius, usurping the Patriarchal See of Constantinople, began in the ninth century the agitation against Rome which culminated in the course of time in a separation of the Greek element from the great Catholic Church, and its formation in 1054 of a new institution, called the Orthodox Church. A thousand years, therefore, had elapsed from the time that Christ founded His Church till the world knew of the existence of the new institution, the Greek Church. Hence it falls into the category of those already considered through its glaring defect of age to connect it as a separate Church with the first century, or the days of the Apostles.

There remains but one more distinct Christian Church to be considered; it is called and known as the Catholic Church. We find its existence in all ages from the Apostles' days to the time of writing this work, which is in the last decade of the nine-

teenth century. Its long list of supreme rulers, or Popes, in unbroken succession from St. Peter, the first Pope, whom Christ appointed the first head of His Church, to its present ruler, Pope Leo XIII., the two hundred and sixty-third successor to the Prince of the Apostles, affords an incontestable proof of its being the Church which is the object of our inquiry. But history in general attests the same fact, so that no reader of the history of the time elapsed since the Christian era can be ignorant of it.

In treating of the antiquity of the Catholic Church, the name of one of her most illustrious sons and defenders comes before the mind, the learned, pious and indefatigable Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria. He ably refuted Arius, who impugned the divinity of Christ in the first Œcumenical Council, which was held at Nice, and presided over by the Pope's legates, A. D. 325. That beautiful and comprehensive exposition of Catholic faith which he has left us deserves insertion here, at least in part, being appropriate to our subject, for it shows the appellation Catholic to be in general use in reference to the Church at that early date. It is called the Athanasian Creed.

The following is a beginning and an end of it: "Whoever wills to be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which, unless each one observes entire and inviolate, without doubt, he shall perish forever." Then he states

what the Catholic faith is and terminates the Creed with these words: "This is the Catholic faith, which, unless each one faithfully and firmly believes, he cannot be saved." The history of every century, from the time of Constantine to the date of the Greek schism, testifies to the existence of the Catholic Church. During the reign of that emperor was held the first Œcumenical Council at Nice, which was presided over by the Pope's legates, and condemned the Arian heresy. The existence of the Catholic Church in the intervening space of time, from that to the days of St. Peter, is easily proved. First, because history does not record the existence of any other Christian Church from the first century to the date of that Council; for the Christian world professed one faith, and was governed by each successive successor to St. Peter in the Papal See of Rome. Secondly, by the names of the Popes presenting a continuous succession from the first appointed by Christ. These are thirty-two in number. Their names are, Melchiades, predecessor to Silvester I., under whom the Council was held; Saints Eusebius, Marcellus I., Marcellinus, Caius, Eutychian, Felix I., Dionysius, Sixtus II., Stephen I., Lucius I., Cornelius, Fabian, Anterus, Pontian, Urban I., Calixtus I., Zephyrinus, Victor I., Eleutherius, Soler, Anicetus, Pius I., Hyginus, Telesphorus, Sixtus I., Alexander I., Evaristus, Anacletus, Clement I., Cletus, and Linus, the immediate successor to St. Peter, the first Pope or head of

the Church, appointed by Christ in the memorable words addressed to him by the Saviour of men: "And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven" (*Matt.*, ch. XVI, v. 18–19); also, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep" (*John*, ch. XXI, v. 15–17).

Extracts from the fathers of the early ages might be given in abundance to strengthen the proof of the existence of the Church in those ages; but this would be evidently superfluous in the presence of the names of the pontiffs given, whose existence no one can deny, and all of whom, three excepted, died for the faith by a glorious martyrdom.

We have traced the existence of the Catholic Church to the earthly life of Christ, and to its first head, St. Peter; it is, therefore, the true Christian Church, and all others must be spurious. All non-Catholic churches have merely human founders. This their history plainly shows. Some are even known by their founders' names: as the Lutheran, the Calvinist, etc.; and the founders of others, which do not so honor their progenitors, are so well known by the reader of history as to need no mention here.

To the Catholic Church alone no mere man is ascribed as her founder. No mere man claims to

be her originator. No history attests that she came into existence by the work of any merely human being. This of itself points to her divine origin, to her foundation by the God-man, the Saviour of the world.

The conspicuousness of the Catholic Church in all ages is a necessary feature of the Church which Christ founded for the salvation of all men to the end of the world. For it is necessary that it should have this prominence that it may be accessible to all classes of men, in every age from the first century to the end of the world, not only to the learned, who form a very small portion of the human race, but also to the unlearned, the great majority of mankind; not merely to the rich but chiefly to the poor, since they are the great mass of humanity; to the weak and the lowly as well as to the great and powerful.

Hence the Church has shone in all ages as a mighty light, casting its rays in all directions so as to be visible in all countries, that all might be drawn to it to find eternal life. In this Church alone is given, by inference, the promise of everlasting life, according to the words of Athanasius, with which he ends his exposition of the Catholic Faith, and which will also end this chapter: "This is the Catholic Faith, which, unless each one faithfully and firmly believes, he cannot be saved."

CHAPTER XIX.

Observations.

SHORTLY after the good seed of the Kingdom of Christ had been sown, tares began to spring up among it. These were the heresies which have troubled the Church from the first century of its existence. In this century appeared the Simonian, the Cerinthian and the Ebionite heresies. Although disturbing her tranquility, they never attained such proportions as to cause grave anxiety, and soon dwindled into insignificance.

The divinity of Christ, which the last named sect attacked, was too firmly impressed on the minds of Christians by the still fresh memory of the doings and life of Christ on earth, and the still more recent preaching of the Apostles, to allow the supplanting of it by the impious doctrine teaching its denial. At a later period an astute and skilful leader revived it, causing serious and prolonged afflictions to the whole Church. In the succeeding centuries heresies arose in gradual succession; some of these much more serious than others. Gnosticism, having its origin in the second, must be regarded one of the most formidable of those existing in the early ages

of the Christian Church. It mixed the true with the false. It taught principles acknowledged by Christianity and some that were not. It tried to supplant pure Christianity by blending it with Paganism. It appealed, therefore, to both Pagans and Christians. Its leading features were the belief in a dual supernatural rule: from one Supreme Being proceeding all that is good, and from the other all that is evil; the Spiritual world being the work of the good Deity over which He presides, the material proceeding from the evil one and subject to him. This heresy seems to anticipate future heresies of a very distant age, for it teaches also justification is to be obtained only by faith. As most of the people of those days were Pagans, or in a state of religious transition, having received with a good disposition the teachings of the Christian Church, though not thoroughly instructed in its principles, no slight danger threatened by a doctrine which offered a form of Christianity that did not wholly deny the time-honored, cherished principles of Paganism, but admitted some of its long established tenets. The danger was augmented by the skill of the philosophic element defending and energetically propagating the heretical doctrine. Its weakness soon, however, manifested itself, dispelling alarm from the Church, for it broke up into several sections, the ultimate phase of all heresies.

In the third century appeared the Novatian and the Manichean and other heresies, which had but a

transient influence in disturbing the tranquility of the Church. They lost in gravity and prominence in the presence of another cause of ecclesiastical conflict, viz., the question of the celebration of the festival of Easter. The bishops of Asia Minor persisted in dissenting from the rest of the Christian world regarding the time it should be observed; so determined were they in their opposition to the general observance that grave apprehension for the integrity of the Church was felt by many. But the nature of the subject in dispute, unless it led to others, seemed hardly to justify grave fears of its disrupting, at any time, the bond of Christian unity; yet the tenacity with which a portion of the Eastern bishops maintained their own opinions in the matter caused much internal uneasiness until the Council of Nice decided the question, making the general observance the universal celebration.

The Arian heresy, which has already been alluded to, had its origin, as also many others, in the fourth century. It eclipsed all other heresies of the early ages of the Church, and, indeed, by some it may be regarded as the most formidable assault on her doctrine that the Catholic Church has experienced in all the ages of her existence to the present time. Yet the divinity of Christ, which Arius denied, finds irrefutable testimony and authority in the Gospel of St. John, whose declaration of it is so strong and clear that Christians living in ages remote from the time of the origin of Christianity

may wonder how the great heresiarch could find supporters, not only among the inferior ecclesiastics but also among the bishops. To understand a cause for their temporary heterodoxy, it is necessary to ascertain the actual condition of the teaching element in the Christian Church, before the complete overthrow of Paganism, embodied in the secular power.

Faith, being a divine gift, may be possessed and adhered to with greater tenacity by the uneducated, than by those having received a moderate education; the latter are more liable to be impressed by the apparent soundness of the reasoning and deductions of a subtle and learned dialectician or philosopher than the former, who, in general, tend towards fanaticism in questions arousing conflict or violence in relation to their religion.

In the first three centuries of its existence, the Christian Church was the object of Pagan persecution, accompanied with intermittent physical violence. In such stormy times, it is easy to conceive how difficult it must have been for its adherents to obtain the benefits of a superior education. Hence it is not improbable that many of its prelates were more conspicuous for their piety, their dispositions for leading holy lives, together with the invincible courage displayed in the mortal ordeal with which many closed their lives, than for the acquisitions of profound erudition. Notwithstanding their amiable characters and exalted positions, they offered suitable material to the unscrupulous, ambitious, and

talented polemetician, when he designed to assail Christianity in one of its fundamental principles. So Arius proved some of them to be, while, by intrigue, he invoked, through the instrumentality of his influential sympathizers, the imperial power to awe into concurrence in his impious doctrine the rest of the episcopacy. This latter element, the secular power, when it had vanquished its Pagan rival, became a source of much anxiety, trouble, and injury, to the peace and prosperity of the Church, although ostensibly acting with the object of promoting Christian unity and harmony. It lent its aid alternately to the Church, and to the promoters and abettors of heresy, according to the caprice or religious tendency of the occupant of the imperial throne at Constantinople.

How much better it would have been for these earthly rulers to keep aloof from religious controversies, at least as regards the use of their authority, leaving them to the divinely constituted authority for settlement, and confining themselves to the laudable and meritorious occupations of protecting their subjects from hostile incursions, and ameliorating their condition by chastising rapacious or unjust officials; thus evincing their characters of worthy rulers, having the contentment and general prosperity of the people at heart, gaining, in return, the love of their subjects, leaving to their successors examples worthy of imitation, and to posterity names that would not be forgotten in the roll of honor.

Though greatly discomfited, at the Council of Nice, by the able refutation of his impious doctrine by the saintly and learned Athanasius, which was followed by the Council's condemnation of the Arian heresy, and the excommunication of its author, Arius had not yet reached the end of his resources, for, through the duplicity of his followers, new stratagems were conceived whereby they hoped to enthrone their idol and make the condemned heresy prevail over the true doctrine. They made the gaining of the imperial favor the great object of their endeavors—the sword and shield with which to conquer.

There would seem to be little ground, at first, to warrant the hope for this alliance, for Constantine, the Emperor, immediately after the Council's action, banished both Arius and his two supporters in the Council, the Bishops Theonas of Marmorica, and Secundus of Ptolemais. Emperors' decrees, however, are not irrevocable, so the Arians did not lose hope, but persevered with energy in their schemes for the recall of their leader. They numbered among their adherents a person of no little influence with the imperial dictator. This was Constantia, the sister of Constantine. On her death-bed she asked, as a favor of her brother, the recall of Arius, with the extension of kind treatment to his followers. The heart of the Emperor was touched; his sympathy for the Catholic Church suddenly changed; the heresiarch was recalled after a few

years of exile. Both he and his principal supporters, by degrees, entrenched themselves behind the imperial favor thus so auspiciously manifested.

Then followed the ominous action of Constantine, banishing Eustathius, the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, and Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, in order to fill these sees with Arian partisans. Such was the beginning of the triumph of Arianism. Its scheme contemplated the subversion of Catholicity by expelling from their sees all Catholic bishops, and filling them with Arians. That exalted office, the Patriarchate of Alexandria, had been the object of Arius' ambition; following the denial of which he immediately began his heresy. A renewal of his attempt to satisfy that ambition shortly after his recall from exile, was also defeated by the refusal of the Church at Alexandria to have communion with the heresiarch and usurper of the office of their beloved, exiled Patriarch, Athanasius. With the imperial favor supporting his cause, he was at length admitted to communion by a Synod, held at Jerusalem. This unholy action supplied a pretext for his reception elsewhere. Constantine having so far espoused his cause, commanded that he should be received into communion at Constantinople. In vain did the holy Patriarch, St. Alexander, offer his protest against the sacrilegious project. What might have followed, had his admission been effected contrary to the teachings of the Church and the decree of the Council recently held, must be left to

conjecture, as it never was consummated. He had arrived at the end of an ignominious career; a mysterious death cut him off from the living. Bathed in his blood with his entrails protruding, he presented a most horrible spectacle, an ominous warning to all his adherents. His heresy, however, did not die with him; fostered by autocratic protection, it gathered strength to make the final charge destined to lead to victory. This, however, was not to be until a more devoted imperial master had placed himself at its head.

The death of Constantine prevented him from doing further injury to the Church. His sons, Constantine II. and Constans, partially remedied the evil by withdrawing favor from the heretics. Arianism, in the meantime, progressed until the arrival of Constantius, its greatest champion, on the throne in A. D. 350, when it exulted in its complete victory. Then did the Church of Christ experience the worst of all her trials. Her bishops refusing to embrace the heretical doctrine, were forced from their bishoprics, and Arians chosen to fill their places. But the vast majority of the faithful remained firm in the true faith, so that at the death of Constantius, he was miserably disappointed at the failure of the great scheme to transform true Christian faith into an impious heresy. The religious strife continued with varying success on either side till the reign of Theodosius the Great, who, seeing the distracted state of the empire and lament-

able condition of the Church, proscribed Arianism as the cause of all the trouble. The heretics were ordered to vacate all the usurped offices of the Church, and forbidden to assemble within the limits of Constantinople. Thus cut off from the imperial city, the hot-bed of their machinations and the source of their supplies, the Arians lost all hope, disappeared as a cause of trouble, enabling both Church and State to enter an era of long desired peace.

In the intervening centuries between the fourth and the sixteenth, though many heresies arose to give some annoyance to the Church of Christ, it would be tedious to severally consider them; for they at no time assumed such power and extension as to cause grave alarm, as did Arianism, which intruded itself into the hierarchal office of the Church, not excepting even the Roman See, the ruler of the Church; for the Arians had also their antipope Felix, with whom they replaced the rightful occupant of the Papal See, Pope Liberius, sent by Constantius into exile. We may, therefore, pass over these minor heresies till we come to the more successful, though less dangerous ones, of more modern times, inaugurated by the revolt of Luther in the sixteenth century. They are less dangerous, however prosperous, because they disclaim all connection with Catholicity.

Modern heresies are almost contrary to Arianism. Arius denied the divinity of Christ, but admitted

the other principles of the Catholic faith. Luther admitted the divinity of Christ, but denied nearly all the principles of the same faith. Arius wished to be in the Church, yet denying one of its fundamental principles and sustaining his belief by plausible arguments. Herein lay the danger of corrupting the faithful, as actually happened. Luther, disregarding all ecclesiastical history and tradition, rejected almost in entirety the principles of Catholic faith, and formed a new one such as either he thought to have existed in the primitive ages of Christianity, or such as by his private interpretation of Sacred Scriptures, for which they were never intended, he thought should exist. To those who had received the faith and persevered in it with humility there was little danger of infidelity, but to those who evinced curiosity regarding the mysteries of faith, beyond due limits, no little danger existed; for they imitated Eve and Lot's wife to a degree, notwithstanding the warning they had received.

When a member of a family becomes discontented under the paternal roof, when he manifests a disposition not to obey the commands and regulations emanating from the head of the family, it results generally in expulsion from the home, or in his voluntary departure to labor for his personal advantage and to find an abode where he shall not be liable to paternal restraint, but have things according to his own will, be his own master. Although the parent may grieve for the incorrigibility of his

son, yet he is pleased at the separation; knows that the home is better without him, free from disturbance and free from the danger of corrupting the other members of the family. Such was the separation of Luther, in a religious sense, from the Catholic Church. He departed and erected a new religious edifice for himself and such followers as would coincide in his religious opinions. By this course there was no fear of him causing internal disturbance to the Church he left.

The course pursued by Arius was different; he did not wish to appear as departing from the Catholic Church, but sought to remain in it, to corrupt the faith of its members by denying one of its essential principles. Hence the commotion caused within the Church productive of long affliction to its members.

From the Arian and the Lutheran with its kindred heresies of modern times, the Catholic Church sustained the greatest shocks; but of these the Arian was by far the most dangerous, permeating, as it did, some of the bishops, the ruling order in the Church.

The great factor in the formation and continuance of modern systems of Christianity, is the erroneous assumption of the Bible as the sole or principal guide to salvation.

When Luther had finally determined to give form to his religious opinions for observance by his followers, having rejected the autthority of the history of the Church, tradition, and the Fathers,

he had ready recourse to the Sacred Scriptures, to justify by his private interpretation of them his novel and peculiar dogmatic opinions. The authors of the other non-Catholic denominations, though differing from him in the distinctive principles of their creeds, followed his example. The Bible was made the final tribunal to decide, by private interpretation, all religious doubts of the mind, all doctrinal disputes arising among the members of their churches.

The Bible thus became the great panacea for assuaging all the religious trouble of the mind. The Bible is undoubtedly a good book. Its parts were written by different authors, supernaturally inspired, as generally or universally believed by Christians. But, like many other things that prove dangerous and even fatal to man, although intended, when rightly used, for his benefit, the Bible requires to be cautiously handled. To the pious, to the devout, to the virtuous, to the person endeavoring to become virtuous, even to the well-disposed having none of these amiable qualities, but who seek instruction, it may be used as a great aid in the work of salvation. It must be read, however, with a due submission to its authoritative interpretation by the true Church of Christ. This condition the Prince of the Apostles clearly states in his second epistle, verse 20: "Understand this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man

at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." In chapter third, same epistle, verses 19 and 20, he insinuates this submission in the following words: "And account the long suffering of Our Lord salvation: as also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." St. Paul shows the utility of the Holy Scriptures in a passage of his second epistle to Timothy, viz: "And because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which can instruct thee to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished in every good work" (II *Timothy*, chap. III, v. 15–17). From these extracts we perceive the necessity of submission to the authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures, and secondly the utility of them in the work of our salvation. But where is it stated that they must be regarded as the sole rule of faith or the absolute guide to salvation? To no man or body of men, since the birth of Christ, did God say at any time, here is the Bible, it contains all that is necessary to guide you to the fulfilment of your duty by your own interpretation of its meaning; read it, ponder

over it and make it your guide to forming your religious opinions and to your religious observances. But God did say to those whom He had appointed to preach to all nations the true Christian faith and to practise true religion: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.*, ch. XXVIII, v. 19–20). In this passage, by the words "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," the supreme authority to guide all men to their eternal salvation is evidently given not to any book, however sacred, but to the Apostles and, as the Church cannot fail since Christ is with it to the end of the world, to their successors also.

It is pertinent to our subject to ask the question: To what power of the mind should be attributed the divergence by any one from sound doctrine or true faith? Whether is it to be ascribed to the intellect or to the will; for these are the powers that lead men to act. The office of the intellect is to learn, to gather information, to possess knowledge in order to decide in all matters for the will to act. It always precedes in action that of the will whose command impels the individual to act. In all matters coming within the scope of reason, the intellect is almost invariably followed by the action

of the will; for it acts as a guide to the latter. But true faith demands of us internal acts in matters transcending the scope of reason. Yet it offers sufficient data for the action of the will in the veracity of God, His justice, His omnipotence to fulfil His promises to the good, to inflict punishment on the wicked by the things known by man to have happened, such as the exact fulfilment of prophecy, the performance of miracles and the terrible punishments inflicted even in this life, as recorded in Scripture on the wicked. In this case the will acts more independently of the intellect than in the sphere of reason, where it depends on the action of the intellect. With regard, then, to the person who rejects or refuses to profess true Christian faith, to which of these powers must be attributed the cause of his action? An ignorant person, relying on the judgment of others, might be induced, though well disposed, to believe in false doctrine. The question, however, has reference to those who have received an ordinary education. Few will deny that the non-Catholic Christian is as well educated as the Catholic. Either, however, has sufficient knowledge to make him judge between the true and the false.

Let us ascend to a class of deeper learning and greater knowledge, viz., the priests of the Catholic and the ministers or preachers of non-Catholic bodies. No one would impute to them, at least, a want of sufficient knowledge or intellectual ability,

to discern the true from the false. Yet these men, after years of study, are divided on the subject of religion, knowing, however, that there can be but one true faith, one true religion. It appears, therefore, that not to the intellect but to the will must be attributed the refusal to profess true faith. The following passage of Scripture sustains the answer and illustrates the subject; it is from the discourse of our Lord concerning the necessity of receiving the Holy Eucharist, or His Sacred Body and Blood, by which declaration some of His disciples renounced adherence to Him: "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, Amen, I say unto you: Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. Many, therefore, of His disciples hearing it said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (*John*, ch. VI, v. 54, 61, 62, 63). There is no reason to doubt that the disbelieving disciples understood the true meaning which our Lord intended to convey by the words: "Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you;" for it cannot be reasonably supposed that Christ, who ardently desired and labored for the salvation of men, would suffer the loss of any disciple through a misunderstanding of His meaning. They had

the same reasons for belief that the faithful disciples had, but these were deemed insufficient to draw their wills to give credence in Christ's divinity and omnipotence. That they did not believe in His power to give them His flesh to eat, and that this was the cause of their separating from Him, is made evident from the last part of the quotation by which he wished to convince them of His power to do what He said concerning the receiving of His sacred flesh: "Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"

If they would not believe in His ability to give His followers His flesh to eat, would they believe, if they had a sensible proof of His omnipotence, in His visible ascent into heaven? Subsequent, though not all, departures from true faith may find in this case their prototype. In matters of faith, therefore, exceeding the limits of reason, it is required of all to submit their will, and whoever refuses the submission of his will, is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER XX.

Enlargement of Christ's Fold.

TO Columbus, Christianity, and not only it, but the nations of the earth, owe a debt of honor. When that intrepid navigator sailed from the shores of Spain, on his memorable voyage of discovery, his most sanguine hope must have found more than its realization in adding to the map of the world one of its greatest continents. In A. D. 1492 he discovered America, which had hitherto been unknown to civilization. Taking possession of it in the name of Ferdinand, King of Spain, he gave to that monarch a region so vast that, in comparison with which, his kingdom would hardly attain to the proportion of a county to a kingdom. He thus added immensely to geographical knowledge, and aroused a spirit of inquiry and exploration which in turn promoted the interests of science and extended the sphere of general knowledge. He gave to the commercial world new marts that should in the future, with the development of the country, become emporiums for all nations.

This vast region he added also to the Kingdom of Christ on earth; for with him sailed the priests

of the Church, who erected the Cross, taking possession of the New World, to be planted and tended as destined to become a fruitful portion of the vineyard of the Lord. By the defection of Luther and other leaders of modern denominations of Christianity, the Church lost considerably in northern Europe; but, by the discovery of America, it gained spiritual jurisdiction over a country many times greater than the territory it lost in the religious secessions of the sixteenth century. And if, in regard to population, the compensation was not, at the time of secession, equal to the loss, it was destined in no distant future time to acquire such extensive dimensions as to far exceed that loss. The scores of millions acknowledging the salutary rule of the Church, near the end of the nineteenth century, amply repay it for the few sparsely populated countries that renounced it in the sixteenth century.

The continued rapid growth of the Catholic Church on the continent of America, from its inception there, leads to the belief that, in some future time, it shall be the prevailing religion, absorbing, if not all, at least the majority of all others. This predictive assertion may be deemed extravagant by some; but the consideration of a few facts will be found more than sufficient to furnish the grounds for it. First, all South America is Catholic, for all its republics profess the Catholic faith; the Catholic religion being the acknowledged national form of

worship. The states of Central America are also Catholic.

In North America, Catholicity is professed by the populous republic of Mexico, whilst in the republic of the United States of America, the members of the Catholic Church exceed in number those of any other denomination. The members of the same Church form nearly one-half of the population of the Dominion of Canada. These statistical statements may be verified by any one having recourse to the census of these countries made in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

With the continual progress of the Church all over the continent, and the great extent of its spiritual rule in the countries referred to, it should not be thought improbable that the American wing of the Catholic Church may yet include in the fold almost the entire population of the Western Continent. There are not wanting other reasons, however, to justify the expectation of this desirable union of the various denominations, acknowledging Christ as their Master.

In systems of religion, whose sole guide to justification is the Bible, subject to private interpretation, there must necessarily arise uneasiness in the mind concerning the adoption of one of different opinions, which may be held of the meaning of many passages of Scripture. That such is the case, the existence alone of the different denominations plainly proves. If, in cases requiring no great learning or knowledge

to decide, men frequently appeal to physical force to sustain their irreconcilable opinions, what disturbed conditions may not arise when different minds are applied to passages of Scripture, which, according to the doctrines of the denominations, admit of different interpretations. Doubt in general cannot be excluded from the members of such systems. Doubt leads to further inquiry, and in some to the reading of the history of the Church of Christ from the beginning. To an unprejudiced mind, the reading of the history of the Church from its inception, should alone suffice to lead the way to the true fold. It is no wonder then that many failing to find in the denominal faith they once professed, that mental quietude they sought after by unprejudiced research, were led into the Catholic Church.

Many accessions in late years have in this and other ways, doubt being dispelled from all classes, been made, affording a hopeful sign of others yet to follow, and of greater numerical extent.

Among the causes promoting the interests of Christianity in general, whilst contributing to a nearer approximation of its various denominations, should not be forgotten the tendency to practise in a higher degree the exalting Christian virtue of charity. The love of one's neighbor is the great command which our Divine Master impressed upon all His followers, so great indeed that He places it next to the love of God; and to emphasize its importance, He declares that the love of God and the

love of our neighbor form the foundation of the whole law and the prophets. Occasionally, spasmodic attempts have been made, by men devoid of this ennobling virtue, in the formation of organizations whose avowed object is to engender sentiments of hatred in one or more denominations against another. The days, however, are nearly past when such evil designs might hope for success by instigating to prejudice, arraying Christian against Christian to practise hatred instead of love.

The humanizing fruits of a better and more general education than could be enjoyed in former days, the mutual knowledge the members of the denominations have of each other's daily life, frustrate and enable them to see through such evil-boding machinations. The majority of every denomination manifest their disapprobation of them by a significant silence, whilst the more courageous, in manly and laudable denunciations. All deliberate instigators to strife and hatred, among the Christian denominations of a nation, not only oppose the progress of Christianity by antagonizing its elements, but menace the peace, unity and prosperity of the nation itself. The words of Christ, "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (*Matt.*, ch. XII, v. 25), aptly apply to the condition of such a nation. Hence all true patriots, all the wise and prudent legislative custodians of a nation, should take the alarm when they perceive in their

midst the propagators of discord among the people, with the ostensible object of injuring one or more denominations, but with the certain result, if allowed to proceed, of affecting the whole nation, disturbing its peace, impeding its prosperity and weakening its unity. The God-fearing men of a nation will frown on all organized attempts to set citizen against citizen, creed against creed, banishing the love of one's neighbor, which Christ made a necessary characteristic of all those who believe in Him, seeking eternal life.

Nowhere does the need of the practice of the great Christian precept of love exist, than in the nations of America; but especially in the vast republic of the United States. There, former citizens of many nations commingle in the process of amalgamation into a new citizenship, and, notwithstanding this, dissimilarity of character will naturally remain; some being of a more sensitive temperament, others susceptible, some cool and phlegmatic to a degree, others excitable, so that in affairs of moment the exercise of mutual forbearance, prompted by Christian love, finds abundant scope for peace, merit and edification. In vain would a Christian aspire to eternal happiness by the performance of other good works, if he should be found wanting in charity. In vain would be his enjoyment of prosperity on earth; in vain the bestowal of his goods on the destitute; in vain, even the sacrifice of his own life for any object, however laudible, if he neg-

lected to fulfil the second great precept of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The message from heaven to earth, ushering in the birth of the Saviour of men, was, Peace on earth to men of good will. Christ is not the God of discord, or of hatred, but of peace, concord, and harmony. As every person is responsible solely to Almighty God for whatever religious opinion or belief he holds, or fails to hold, so it must be deemed culpable presumption for any one or body of men to hate, persecute, or injure others, because of their religious belief. God is sole judge, punisher, or rewarder. Therefore, whoever injures another physically, or causes animosity or hatred in others against him, which may be more detrimental than physical violence because of his religion, invades divine right. He cannot hope to escape divine justice; but justice requires that due reparation be made for all injury unlawfully inflicted. As every Christian then has taken upon himself the obligation to fulfil the precept of neighborly love, he should not only avoid the snares but, by lawful means, counteract the evil designs of those nominal Christians who, however specious their arguments, would substitute enmity instead of it.

Whatever may be the future political life of America, Christianity has been firmly established there, and will continue to prosper and multiply its adherents from one end of the continent to the other. Contemplating its vast wealth, its exhaust-

less resources of minerals of all descriptions, from the most precious downward, its prodigious growth of cereals and all the necessaries of life far exceeding the needs of its inhabitants, the wonderful ingenuity and spirit of enterprise of its people perceptible in the rapid development of the country, the mind may form an idea, but will fail to find a limit to its greatness. Its inter-continental position makes its harbors easy of access to those engaged in commerce. It is thus admirably situated and conditioned to exercise no slight influence on the rest of the world, and will continue to do so with increasing effect in the future. Having secured Christianity for her own children, America may generously supply a contingent of zealous sons to participate in the great spiritual mission of supplanting with true Christianity, paganism and idolatry, deeply intrenched in Asia, the greatest of the continents, where they have defied the advance of Christianity for so many centuries.

Over this, as it is over the others, the Cross must be triumphant. Africa may be regarded as virtually conquered by Christianity; for with Christian nations pouring in on it on all sides from Europe, the conversion of its inhabitants requires merely time to instruct them for its reception, rather than the will or ability to resist it. With Africa, then, in the hands of Christians, all the continents of the earth, Asia excepted, are subject to Christian rule.

As the preachers of the Gospel of Christ cannot remain inactive as long as paganism or idolatry shows signs of life, so the Asiatic continent will afford the theatre for the final struggle between the followers of the false gods and those of the true God.

Australia, with her neighboring islands, is the last of the great divisions of the globe to enter the fold of Christ. Long did she wait in the night of her spiritual darkness for the dawn of the heavenly light that should bring her to Christ her Spouse. Clasped in the arms of the Gospel and civilization, she manifested to the world, in an incredibly short time, her admired natural gifts. She promises well, in course of time, to rival her elder sisters in the fruitfulness of her portion of the vineyard of the Lord.

Australia, like America, possesses vast natural sources of wealth and great capabilities of extensive commerce, with her ingredients of national prosperity, leading to a future greatness commensurate with the development of the country. It is, however, to her religious aspect that attention is here directed. In the brief space of a century, from a few colonists, she has given to the Church such numbers of children that ere long they will be reckoned by millions. These, like their co-religionists in America, manifest the same spirit of intellectual activity and general progress that operates there. Churches, schools, colleges and religious institutions have been erected by the hundred.

What a cause of rejoicing to the lovers of Christian progress! And yet the work is just beginning. This great field needs only to be tended to make it one of the most fruitful portions of Christ's vineyard. The overseers have already been appointed for its care. It shall flourish under them; for, in addition to the zeal that actuates them, there is the weighty motive that they have to render account of their stewardship to the Master of the vineyard, hoping to obtain that ineffable reward that He has promised to His faithful servants.

The different denominations of Christianity are to be found side by side with each other in Australia, as in America. Although laboring for the success of their particular creeds, they do not forget the great precept of Christian love. Whilst each, therefore, tends to the Church to which his conscience directs him, he extends to others differing from him that mutual respect begotten of charity, so edifying among Christians.

The great progress which Australia has already made in religion, politics, science, national development, and her ever-growing commerce, supply data for the belief in her excelling greatness in the future. Her prospects should be even brighter than those of America. Being less cosmopolitan in the character of her people than America, the solidity of national unity is of far easier achievement with her than with the other. Nearly all her inhabitants, exclusive of the few Aborigines, can claim Great Britain and

Ireland as their ancestral homes, whilst nearly all nations may claim a share in the formation of the national character of North Americans. Obviously, it requires great skill, prudence, and firmness in the rulers and legislators of a country, where immigrants from many nations have decided to make their future homes, to assimilate them with the rest so as to acquire the spirit of the nation, and divesting them of foreign peculiarities that they may become absorbed in the crucible of national unity. Australia is comparatively exempt from this necessity. Whatever vicissitudes she may have to experience in her national life, she shall have fewer dangers to apprehend in any crisis, political or otherwise, which occasionally occurring, tests the unity of a nation.

With her rich and abundant natural resources, Australia cannot fail to prosper in the future, even more rapidly than in the past. The extent of her greatness will appear with the development of the country; this promises to be at no slow pace. Her spacious and numerous harbors, with many other facilities for trade, enable her to have a most extensive commerce, so as to justify the belief that she will in course of time rival the greatest commercial nations of the earth. She will also extend, by her international communications, her christianizing influence in those countries and islands not at the greatest distance from her, where infidelity and idolatry have for centuries fortified themselves in the minds of the natives, inciting them to fierce

hostility against the peaceful introduction of Christianity among them.

In the discovery of these two continents, and their subjection to the rule of Christianity, we perceive the wonderful progress it has made, and that its steady advance in the future is assured, with brightest prospect of other conquests. It should not be forgotten, however, that nearly half of the human race are yet in spiritual darkness in the greatest of the continents of the earth. The preachers of the Gospel of Christ cannot be inactive till they have conquered Asia also for their Divine Master.

The wonderful growth of the Catholic Church on the continents of America and Australia, with their adjacent islands, must be apparent to all who know the religious history of these countries. Small in her beginning, like the mustard seed of Scriptural parable, she has grown and expanded by degrees till she has overspread with her branches nearly all the lands of the earth. Nowhere does she manifest the proof of her supernatural vitality, the innate vigor of which she is possessed, than in these great divisions of the globe. Noiselessly does she labor, sending forth her children with the maternal blessing, in the vineyard of her Spouse, to extend its limits and to reap the spiritual harvest. As she has grown apace with the progress of these continents, in civilization and national development, so she shall continue to do so in the future. Her present grand dimensions afford the idea of the

immensity of the magnitude to which she will yet attain.

When the religious storm of the sixteenth century raged with remorseless violence over the northern portion of her flock in Europe, severing them temporarily from the fold, many may have thought that the old Christian Church would resemble those great empires that in ages past attracted the admiration of their contemporaries at their incomparable wealth, power and magnificence, but which in time became dismembered, decayed, fell into ruin, finally disappearing as if they had never existed. Why have they so passed away? Because they were human edifices. All human structures can have only a temporary existence. The Church survived the storm as she had others long before it. Christ declared she would survive all storms and all assaults when He founded her on a rock. The reason is evident. She subsists not by mere human means, but also by those that are supernatural.

The Church not only recovered from the shock, but soon evinced no impairment in her vigor, no abatement in her zeal for new spiritual conquests; with increased activity she sent forth in all directions her devoted sons to repair her loss, to seek new fields to be added to her great vineyard. Her efforts have been rewarded with unparallelled success. The acquisition of the continents of America and Australia with innumerable islands is the proof of that success. Their acquisition also verifies the assertion that the

Church has been more than adequately compensated for her European loss in the troublous times of the sixteenth century. That loss, nevertheless, has been keenly felt by her because of the unjustifiable means by which the separation of her children from her was effected. But this separation, though protracted, should be regarded as only temporary, as it is shown in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

Return to the Fold.

THOSE who, through dissatisfaction with Christian doctrine taught from the beginning, desirous of a more rational one, separated themselves from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century, found themselves in the necessity of formulating new creeds in accordance with their desires. This was no easy task, for the most eminent leader in each distinct division of the seceders, if he hoped for success, had to consider the opinions of others as well as his own. Hence each had to abandon or modify his cherished private judgment in order to preserve the appearance of unity among his followers, some of whose opinions, from acknowledged reputation for erudition of their holders or general influence, it would be imprudent to disregard. A course of compromise was the result. This was the more easily effected because of the admitted right of private interpretation of the Holy Scripture.

Having rejected the Catholic Church, with all tradition, they were forced to have recourse for formulating their systems and founding their churches to the book called the New Testament.

Here they found ample play for both intellect and imagination. This book they made the fundamental, the essential of their differing creeds.

Did the thought never occur to the founders of the new denominations that they were assuming as essential what was not so in reality to true Christianity? Did they not know that true Christianity had been established without the aid, long before the existence of the book called the New Testament? What was not essential to true Christianity at the time of its establishment by Christ, cannot be an essential of it in the sixteenth, or any other century.

Taking this silent authority as the basis of their religion, in the interpretation of whose contents even the most learned disagree, the future dissensions and strife among the members of each denomination might be easily foreseen.

When a member, using his private judgment, expressed an opinion on any Scriptural passage disagreeing with that of the majority, he might expect to be judged guilty of heresy. Either of two alternatives had to be adopted, to renounce his private judgment, or to be arraigned, tried and expelled. Seldom complying with the former and anticipating the latter, the discontented generally left his denomination, sought membership in another, or became the originator of a new one. Hence the splitting-up process that has accompanied the denominations almost from the time of their origin, and which has become the prolific parent of the multitude of Chris-

tian sects with peculiar creeds. Looking to the foundation of these bodies, the material for cohesion must be very weak and deficient. In days not very remote, they could be easily swayed by the oratory of their preachers appealing to the passions. The fruitful theme of their invectives was antagonism to the Catholic Church. When the first seceders from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century had died, their posterity up to a late date had no adequate conception of Catholic religion. Various causes contributed to this ignorance of the Church of their forefathers. The cultivated prejudices that sprang up in the religious strife in the early days of the denominations may be assigned as one. To this should be added want of education. Till recently the education of the vast majority of a nation was limited to the attainment of the knowledge of reading and writing, and the elements of arithmetic. Even these slight acquisitions many of the people did not possess.

As the uneducated offer the best soil for the operation of inflammatory addresses, it may be easily conceived how immense was the field open to the display of passionate invectives. The rapid progress of civilization, of science, and of art in the nineteenth century, with the developments that have followed, gave an impetus to the desire of more extensive knowledge; causing the demand of a higher, a more comprehensive education. About the middle of this century dawned the era of this higher educa-

tion for the masses. The nations also who aspire to eminence among others, as also those that desire to preserve themselves from absorption by more powerful and ambitious neighbors, perceiving a source of national strength in the mental development of the people, have cheerfully espoused the cause promoting the nation's interests by the benefits accruing from a higher education.

No longer will reading, writing, with a little arithmetic, suffice to equip the average member of a nation for the duties of life. He must go far beyond these old educational limits; his mental scope must be greatly enlarged. He is expected to know in addition to these, grammar, history, the outlines of physical science, of the more abstract science of algebra, geometry, etc. The acquisition of school education, or attendance at school for a number of years is no longer an optional affair to parent or child as in former times. By compulsory education the governments of nations evince the keen interest they take in and the importance they attach to the enlightenment of all their members. Great results must naturally follow the higher education of the people. It has rendered them competent, with a little training, to fill many offices in public life, from which their lack of knowledge had formerly excluded them.

It has contributed to a closer international connection by stimulating the spirit of business and enterprise, displaying itself with increasing activity

in the various lines of international commerce. It has also made itself felt by the preacher or pulpit orator when addressing an audience. Few preachers will venture a strong appeal to the passions as formerly characterized the sermons of many vehement speakers. They will choose rather to deliver their discourses in the garb of sound reasoning, if they hope to produce effect; for the average audience, unlike those of former days, will discouragingly respond to the most skilful prepared invective. A preacher may expect his hearers to soberly think on, discuss, and even criticise his utterances. This altered mental status of audiences has considerably weakened the preacher's influence, so that ministers of non-Catholic denominations have felt the members of their charge gradually pass from their grasp.

One of the most salutary results of the greater enlightenment of the people has been the impetus given to inquiry into various matters, especially those of religion.

The prejudice that once broadened the distance between those differing in religion is fast disappearing. Many make personal inquiry into the Catholic religion, of which they had previously but the slightest knowledge. Others ask explanations of those who know and practise it. Then they test it by the authority they have been taught to regard as a standard, the New Testament. Then begins the mental struggle. They find the literal meaning of Scriptural passages to apply to the dogmas of

Catholic faith. This was the faith professed by their great ancestors; the faith whose source they cannot reach till they arrive at the first century. The investigation continues with increased interest. History is read with avidity, particularly that relating to the birth of the non-Catholic denominations in the sixteenth century. Who inspired Luther or any other leader? What authority had he to forsake the Catholic Church, to apply other than the literal meaning to many passages of Scripture, contrary to the constant teaching of the Church up to his time? What thoughts arise in the mind on the eve of conversion, to the person anxious about the salvation of his soul! The light of truth dispelling all doubt, heralds the grace of conversion, and his troubled mind finds at length its desired rest in the Catholic Church, the true fold of Christ.

The many conversions to the Catholic faith, which have taken place in recent years, warrant the assertion that the tide of the return of the separated children of the Church has already set in. As this increasing influx proceeds from different countries, it cannot be characterized as merely local; it is general. That it is general is further confirmed from the fact that it includes members of all classes of society. Its most significant feature is the large number of ministers of various non-Catholic denominations who have entered the true fold. Scarcely a year of conversions passes without including its clerical contingent.

Nowhere is the return of the ministerial element more remarkable than in England. There the flow has steadily continued since Newman and Manning found peace for their souls in the Catholic Church. Although the number of conversions in England greatly exceeds those of any other nation, yet, whilst exciting extensive interest in the lovers of Christian unity, they may naturally be expected, when the cause, with the peculiar circumstances of the people at the time of the separation of the English nation from the Catholic Church, is rightly considered. Every student of English history knows that the unlawful passion of King Henry VIII. for a woman was the cause of that separation. When the reigning Pope refused to sanction the king's adulterous desire, the monarch refused to obey the law of the Church, and in retaliation for the refusal to acquiesce in his adulterous course, he severed not only his own connection with the Church, but also that of the nation under him. This may seem startling to the people of the nineteenth century, enjoying freedom of worshipping God according to their conscience; but it was, nevertheless, feasible under a sovereign of a tyrannical character like that of Henry VIII. The king's will was law in matters of religion, as in those regarding the state. Of course the people protested and resisted the king's innovation in the Catholic religion of the nation; but in vain. They were whipped into compliance with the king's wishes, into acceptance of

the new religion prescribed by royal authority. In such circumstances there could be no sincere profession of belief in the Anglican religion, thus introduced. It is a religion forced upon the people by royal power and an act of Parliament. It would be futile to expect cohesion among its members from the coercive means by which it was inaugurated. Its sequel of dissension, strife, and separation into minor sects could hardly be unforeseen by even superficial observers. These results began to manifest themselves not long after its inception, notwithstanding stringent measures for conformity to the form of worship established by law.

The process of disintegration in the Anglican Church has been so successful that near the end of the nineteenth century, the non-conformist element in the population of Great Britain rivals in extent that of the Anglican or National Church. If such be its failure when aided by the law of the land, fostered by the highest secular authority, what shall be its fate when the knell of its disestablishment shall sound, when all state-support shall be withdrawn from it?

To the attainment of this object, measures of late have been tending. In the legislative body, the sentiment against favoring any Church as a national institution has been constantly increasing, so that its connection with the state may at any time be severed by the same authority by which its establishment was effected. The ministers of the Anglican Church

must foresee this separation, and for some time they have evinced no slight concern in the gloomy prospect. The eyes of many have been opened to the inanity of the Anglican Church. They have in vain tried to satisfy the yearnings of the heart by introducing into it ceremonies like those practised in the Catholic Church, evincing thereby their leaning towards that Church. Those innovations the conservative Anglicans resent. They have elicited protests and bitter hostility all over the kingdom, but still they proceed in the work of transformation. On this account it is quite a common spectacle to see one portion of an Anglican congregation arrayed against the other. One supports the courageous pastor, who tries to infuse into them a purer religion by imitating to a great extent the Catholic form of worship, whilst the other opposes the innovator with all their might.

Thus a condition of chronic dissension, strife and disorder prevails throughout the Anglican establishment. These, with other causes, have induced many to make a deeper study of the Christian religion, that they may satisfy the ever-recurring doubt as to the true faith. Unprejudiced inquiry invariably results to those anxious about their eternal salvation in pointing out the way to the Catholic fold. Many in following it have made sacrifices of a secular nature, yet demanding no little fortitude on the part of the convert. Many have had to experience coldness, if not worse, from social acquaintances with

whom they had once been on terms of intimate friendship. Others had to renounce no inconsiderable possessions or claims to heritages, from obeying the voice of conscience in the return to the faith of their forefathers. These, however great in the estimation of worldings, are rightly considered insignificant by the spiritual man, who deems all earthly possessions as too trivial to be compared to the happiness of the Saints when they enter into the joys of their Lord. To participate in the glory of God requires the will to be ready to renounce all earthly wealth, honors, and power, when these would deprive the soul of happiness, and procure instead endless misery in its future state. Not only these must a man renounce, but all social ties, all bonds of kindred; he must even go so far as to renounce his own life, according to the words of Christ, if he would secure himself a share in the Kingdom of Heaven. "If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple; and whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (*Luke*, ch. XIV, v. 26–27). If, therefore, a person loves anything most dearly and finds it a hindrance to his salvation, he must detach his heart from it and bear with Christian resignation the burdens thereby incurred. If some in modern times have cheerfully suffered the deprivation of worldly goods, or worldly honors, for the sake of their souls, though showing

their true wisdom and magnanimity, yet such action among Christians, especially in the early ages of Christianity, is not rare; for then, not only riches, honor, friendship, and power were abandoned, but life itself was joyfully surrendered in the greatest trial of faith, the tortures of the Christian martyr. When remembering this, no sacrifice which any member of the denominations dissentient from the Catholic Church may make can be too great.

Whilst the return of her children from all the nations separated from her fold, is joyfully welcomed by the Church, she may be pardoned in intensifying her joy in receiving to her maternal embrace the descendants of her once beloved British flock. She knows that they were snatched from her by violence without the co-operation of their free-will, and hence her yearning for them since the days of separation, which cannot be appeased till she sees their union with her happily consummated. Her hopes for the realization of this expected union have of late been considerably increased. The number of conversions in the past has been great, but in comparison with the predicted return of multitudes at apparently no very distant time in the future, it will be found small in proportion.

There is an almost general movement in the Anglican Church towards the unity of faith with the Church of all ages, that cannot be denied. The transforming phase in the inner life of the former cannot be mistaken in its indication of the end in

view. The conservative portion may try, by various measures, to impede or thwart this movement; but they cannot arrest its progress. It cannot be frustrated either by the pen or the sword, for, happily, the latter no longer hangs over the head of its members for expressing opinions, or acting contrary to the practice of the established Church in former times. The noble workers in the great movement for religious unity will have the cheering sympathy of all true Christians, who regard with increasing interest its continued development, till it culminates in its accomplishment of final reunion.

May the divine light guide those, and they are many, who are actively and zealously engaged in promoting the great work, that they may find in their earnest search the way to the true fold, the soul's rest.

To the continued flow of converts from the British Isles, must be added the increasing influx from other nations. Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, so long averse to reconciliation, have at length recognized their discarded mother. Their return is slow, but sure; for many members of these nations, once so hostile to the Catholic Church, have already embraced her faith. Like the grain of the Gospel parable, the seed of true faith has already been resown, and its extension proceeds gradually, and almost unobserved, till it permeates the whole mass of the nations. How can these nations view with pride the highest institutions of learning erected in

their midst, and be forgetful of the Church under whose fostering care for the enlightenment of the people they were established. Ingratitude, with unnatural antipathy, cannot always sway the human heart. When passion has expended itself, calm reason will resume its reign in a well-ordinated mind. These nations will yet sing the praises of the mother, who so fondly cherished them as the youngest of her offspring, in the great European wing of the Christian family.

In Germany the prospects of the Catholic Church are most encouraging. There, the birth-place of separation from her in the sixteenth century, she continually augments her fold. There, her children are rapidly regaining lost ground. Her gains must not be ascribed to the prolification alone of her German flock, who remained faithful to her in the great revolution, but also to the return of the lost sheep who languished in the arid pastures far off, which invited with the delusive hope of safety and unbounded liberty. They find the same joyful welcome awaiting them as extended to her other children. When the Scriptures were constituted the sole guide to salvation, subject, however, to the direction which private judgment chose to take, it must inevitably develop into a rational religion, and nothing more, as has actually happened.

In Germany we behold the lamentable results of such a pernicious doctrine. Its ultimate issue must be irreligion. Think as you please, do as you please.

The Church, rescuing the misguided in this dangerous condition, has proved herself also the saviour of society; for where irreligion prevails, the bonds of society are menaced; the welfare of the nation, peace, and prosperity are endangered. Modern governments have perceived this, and have removed the restrictions under which she formerly labored. The tendency to unity of faith is not less apparent in Germany than elsewhere. Its necessity is felt by the enlightened of all denominations, who deserve commendation for their efforts to preserve the people from irreligion and infidelity.

A safe criterion of the progress of the Church in Germany is the number of her adherents. It is little less than half the entire population, but with the maintenance of the ratio of increase, it should at no distant future considerably exceed the half. The union of the whole, or the great majority of the nation in the true faith, may therefore be reasonably predicted.

Where the Church battled long to plant her standard, glorious success has at length rewarded her efforts. In the regions of Asia, covered with dense populations, her zealous sons are incessant, spreading the light of faith. New countries are being rapidly added to the Kingdom of Christ on earth. Streams of neophytes from all these sunny lands incessantly flow to the Church of all nations, the true fold of Christ. But in these smiling countries with vast populations, whilst the harvest

is ripe, the laborers are few. It should, therefore, be the object at heart of every true lover of Christ to give effect to his Divine Master's exhortation: "Pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send more laborers to reap the harvest."

In all quarters of the globe we behold the advance of the Catholic Church. In the nations once her's, but for some time separated from her, we see the general tendency to re-enter her fold. In the nations far off, who for ages have lived in spiritual darkness, she finds a ready response to the light of faith. What joyful hope, then, should fill the heart of every follower of Christ for the union of all Christians in one faith, as they acknowledge but one Lord and Master! May this noblest of works be aided by each one, according to his ability, and thus may he co-operate with the prayer for unity among his followers, which our dear Lord uttered on the ever-memorable night before He offered Himself a sacrifice for our salvation: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me: That all may be one as Thou, Father in Me and I in Thee; that they may also be one in Us, etc." (*Jn.* XVII, v. 22).

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